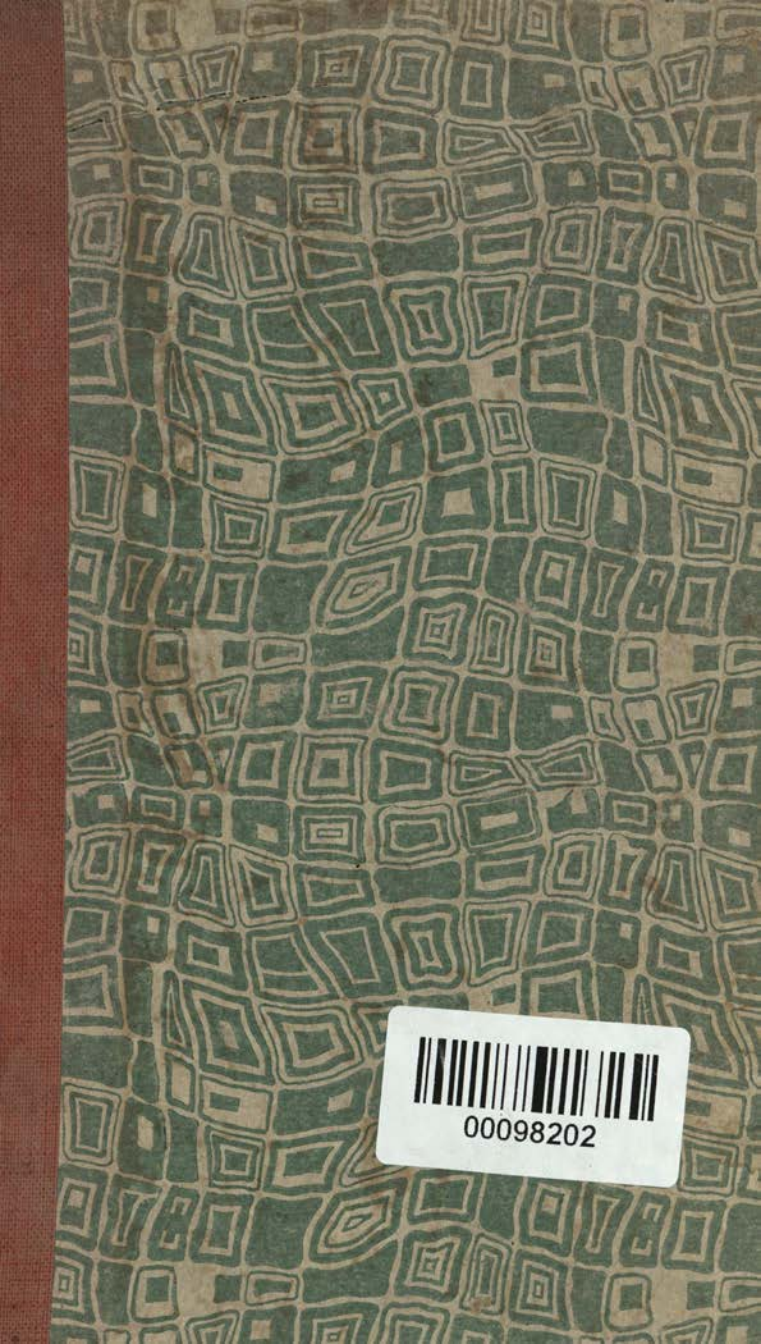
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DANTE'S TEN HEAVENS

A STUDY OF THE PARADISO

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BY

EDMUND G. GARDNER, M.A.

GONVILLE AND CAIUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

"The incredible excess of unsensed sweet,
And mystic wall of strange felicity."

FRANCIS THOMPSON.

WESTMINSTER
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MY MOTHER

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.

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These seven essays are intended to serve as an introduction to the study of Dante's *Paradiso*. They are partly based upon the mediæval commentaries of the author of the "Ottimo Commento" (1334), and Benvenuto da Imola (1379); and upon the modern works of Scartazzini, Lubin, and Cornoldi. I am also especially indebted to Fraticelli's and Giuliani's editions of Dante's Minor Works; Mr. F. J. Church's translation of the *De Monarchia;* Miss K. Hillard's translation of the *Convito;* Hettinger's *Scope and Value of the Divina Commedia,* edited by Father H. S. Bowden; Father J. Rickaby's *Aquinas Ethicus;* Mr. A. J. Butler's edition of the *Paradiso;* the Rev. J. H. Lupton's *Joannes Coletus super opera Dionysii;* Cornoldi's *Physical System of St. Thomas,* translated by Mr. E. H. Dering.

The translation of the *Divina Commedia* quoted is usually that of Longfellow, the *De Monarchia* that of Mr. Church, and the *Convito* usually Miss Hillard's. For the Second Part of the *Summa Theologica* I have frequently availed myself of the abbreviated version in *Aquinas Ethicus*. The appended list of books is not a complete bibliography, but merely represents the works most frequently consulted or found most helpful.

My grateful thanks are due to the Rev. George Tyrrell, S.J., who has kindly read through the proofs of this book, and aided me with his suggestions and criticism; and to the Rev. P. H. Wicksteed, M.A., for many valuable suggestions upon the first two chapters, which have either been incorporated into the text or have led me to modify my judgments upon special points in question.

E. G. G.

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Chapter I.

DANTE'S PARADISE.

I. ANIMA JUSTI.

> "Cælum est anima justi, sicut Dominus per prophetam dicit: cælum mihi sedes est." St. Bernard, *Liber de modo bene vivendi.*

Benvenuto da Imola commences his commentary on the *Paradiso* by quoting a sentence of the Arabian philosopher Averrhoes: *Bonum est cribrare modium sabuli ut quis inveniat unum margaritam*,—it is good to sift a measure of sand to find a pearl. And Benvenuto goes on in his quaint mediæval fashion to explain how Dante, this *curiosissimus indagator*, performs this operation in his divine poem. The first measure of sand, the *Inferno*, gave him the disposition of escaping from endless woe; a second measure, the *Purgatorio*, showed him the true and arduous way to come to this pearl of great price; and now, finally, he sifts a third measure of sand, the *Paradiso*, and here he finds that most precious pearl, the reward of all his labours, eternal glory in the fruition of God.

The description of this eternal glory and the mediæval conception of Paradise as the mystical union of the soul with the First Cause in vision, love and enjoyment, and

the comprehension of the most sublime and secret things of the celestial mysteries, is therefore the theme of Dante's *Paradiso*. It is perhaps still the least popular, the least generally intelligible part of the Divine Comedy. Ruskin has somewhere spoken of the difficulty of having "nobility enough in one's own thoughts to forgive the failure of any other human soul to speak clearly what it has felt of the most divine." Perhaps in the *Inferno* the dramatic side of Dante's genius is more obvious, in those clear and terrible pictures of human passion and suffering against a background of lurid flame. In the *Purgatorio* Dante seems more the spokesman and poet of all humanity; his teaching in that second canticle, even for non-Catholics who reject the doctrine of Purgatory, seems to be of more general and universal application, corresponding to something in the heart and conscience of man. In the *Paradiso* Dante appears as essentially the man of the Middle Ages. Here, perhaps more than in any other part of the poem, does Dante show himself in thorough sympathy with his age, its doctrines and rudimentary science, its yearning for knowledge, its delight in the beauty of intellectual satisfaction. It is such works as the *Paradiso* that enable us to realise what were the noblest thoughts and aspirations of those ages, whose exceeding light has so dazzled weak modern eyesight that they have sometimes been called dark, for in them—

> L'occhio si smarria
> Come virtù che a troppo si confonda. [1]

There is a sublime passage in the *Summa Theologica* which gives a key to the comprehension of this boundless

[1] *Purg.* viii. The eye is bewildered as faculty that is confounded by excess.

yearning, boundless but confident, for the satisfaction of the intellect. Aquinas is discussing the question concerning the essence of beatitude: Does the beatitude of man consist in the vision of the Divine Essence? and he answers it thus:—

"The last and perfect happiness of man cannot be otherwise than in the vision of the Divine Essence. In evidence of this statement two points are to be considered: first, that man is not perfectly happy so long as there remains anything for him to desire and seek; secondly, that the perfection of every power is determined by the nature of its object. Now the object of the intellect is the essence of a thing: hence the intellect attains to perfection so far as it knows the essence of what is before it. And therefore, when a man knows an effect, and knows that it has a cause, there is in him an outstanding natural desire of knowing the essence of the cause. If therefore a human intellect knows the essence of a created effect without knowing aught of God beyond the fact of His existence, the perfection of that intellect does not yet adequately reach the First Cause, but the intellect has an outstanding natural desire of searching into the said Cause: hence it is not yet perfectly happy. For perfect happiness, therefore, it is necessary that the intellect shall reach as far as the very essence of the First Cause." [1]

Thus, he adds, the intellect will have its perfection through being united to God, as to the object in which alone the beatitude of man consists. United to the source of all good in this vision of the Divine Essence, the soul is filled with all good things. This beatitude of man belongs therefore to the intellectual faculty, since by no activity of sense

[1] *Summa*, I—2. Q. 3. a. 8. (Rickaby, *Aquinas Ethicus*).

can man be united to this uncreated Good. And so Dante's Paradise is the beatitude of the intellect in joyful possession of absolute Truth, the supreme bliss which is reached in the Empyrean Heaven of pure light—

> Luce intellettual piena d'amore,
> Amor di vero ben pien di letizia,
> Letizia che trascende ogni dolzore. [1]

Notwithstanding its essentially mediæval character, the closest students of Dante are usually agreed in ranking the *Paradiso* highest of the three parts of the Divine Comedy. "It is a perpetual hymn of everlasting love," wrote Shelley in his *Defence of Poetry:* "Dante's apotheosis of Beatrice and the gradations of his own love and her loveliness, by which as by steps he feigns himself to have ascended to the throne of the Supreme Cause, is the most glorious imagination of modern poetry." No less beautiful and true is Shelley's characterisation of Dante as poet of the *Paradiso* in his own unfinished masterpiece, *The Triumph of Life*, where he speaks again—

> Of him who from the lowest depths of hell
> Through every paradise and through all glory
> Love led serene, and who returned to tell
>
> . . . . . the wondrous story
> How all things are transfigured except Love.

Knowledge and Love are the two supreme and inseparable themes of Dante's *Paradiso:* the love of the *Vita Nuova* and the philosophical devotion of the *Convito* are here united

[1] Light intellectual replete with love,
Love of true good replete with ecstasy,
Ecstasy that transcendeth every sweetness.
Par. xxx. LONGFELLOW.

and rendered perfect in knowledge and love of the Supreme and Uncreated Good.

The Divine Comedy is at once a vision and an allegory; a vision of the unseen world beyond the grave, and, based upon that vision, an allegory of the nature of vice and of virtue, of the guidance of human wisdom and celestial wisdom, reason and revelation, and of the duties of man towards the Empire and the Church. It is a vision of the state of souls after death; it is an allegory of how man whilst still in this life may use his free will for good or for evil, and so incur reward or punishment.

The subject, therefore, of the *Paradiso* in the literal sense is the state of the souls of the blessed after death, and in the allegory it may be taken as "the beauty of virtue as shown by the greatness of the reward," which is practically a deduction from the words in the Letter to Can Grande: "Man, in so far as by meritorious use of free will he is subject to the justice that rewards." [1] If the *Purgatorio* is an allegory of the real life of man upon earth, the *Paradiso* represents the ideal life whether passed in action or contemplation. Some of the early commentators express this twofold meaning by their distinction between the *essential* Paradise of blessed souls after death, and the *moral* or *spiritual* Paradise of virtuous and contemplative spirits still united to their bodies in this world. Yet the work can never sink to the cold level of a mere allegory. In the complicated mediæval system of fourfold interpretation of the Scriptures, the old law is the figure of the new law, and the new law, in the anagogical sense, is the figure of future glory; and similarly Jerusalem, in the literal or

[1] "Si vero accipiatur opus allegorice, subjectum est homo, prout merendo et demerendo per arbitrii libertatem justitiæ præmianti aut punienti obnoxius est."

historical sense the city of the Jews, admits of a three-fold interpretation as the Church, the spiritual life, and anagogically our heavenly city of Paradise. The anagogical sense is the signification of those things which are in eternal glory, it indicates the object of hope and the goal of yearning upward effort—the *quid speres* or *quo tendas* of the doggerel verses of the schoolmen. [1] From the nature itself of the subject matter it is impossible in Dante's *Paradiso* to separate this supreme mystical sense from the literal meaning and the allegory, since Paradise itself is the reward of a righteous use of man's free will—

> Ma chi prende sua croce e segue Cristo
> Ancor mi scuserà di quel ch'io lasso,
> Vedendo in quell'albòr balenar Cristo.
>
> *Par.* xiv. 106.[2]

Thus this supreme mystical sense, this *sobria ebrietas* of anagogy, is seldom wholly absent throughout the *Paradiso;* but rests upon and crowns the literal sense and the allegory as delight sits upon activity. It is no mere poetical fiction that is signified by the letter; Dante believed in the truth of what he sang, and, though necessarily concealed for a while and expressed under veils of sensible images, the literal Paradise of the concluding cantos of his poem is

---

[1] Of the three spiritual meanings in which the Scriptures are to be understood, the *moral* or *tropological* sense is that in which examples are set for us to follow: *Morales quid agas.* This sense exists in the *Paradiso* too; but is usually left for the reader to draw for himself: "This moral sense," Dante says in the *Convito*, "readers should carefully gather from all writings for the benefit of themselves and their descendants."

[2] But he who takes his Cross and follows Christ
Again will pardon me what I omit,
Seeing in that aurora lighten Christ.
LONGFELLOW.

indeed the consummation of his labours and the reward he hoped for and strove towards—the signification of the things beyond sense, the supernal things of eternal glory. This is expressed by the poet himself in his exclamation in Canto xxii—

> S'io torni mai, lettore, a quel devoto
> Trionfo, per lo qual io piango spesso
> Le mie peccata e il petto mi percuoto.
> *Par.* xxii. 106.[1]

Without entering into the question of how far the political allegories of comparatively modern discovery really exist in the divine poem, it may safely be concluded that, from the nature of Dante's views, they cannot hold much place in the *Paradiso*. The Emperor himself, the supreme political power and temporal authority, he who has to care for the world and to secure that in this *areola* of earth belonging to mortal man—*L'aiuola che ci fa tanto feroci* [2]—life may pass in freedom and with peace, can but guide man in accordance with the teachings of Philosophy to "the blessedness of this life, which consists in the exercise of his natural powers and which is prefigured in the Earthly Paradise" (*De Monarchia*, iii.16). With the attainment of the Earthly Paradise under the guidance of Human Wisdom (reason and philosophy) and the Imperial Power, and then the resignation by Virgil of his leadership, whatever political allegory there was must of necessity have been completed. Such a political regeneration of Christendom indicated in the attainment of

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[1] Reader, as I may unto that devout
Triumph return, on whose account I often
For my transgressions weep and beat my breast.
LONGFELLOW.

[2] The little space that maketh us so fierce. *Par.* xxii. *Aiuola* is sometimes translated *threshing-floor*.

the Earthly Paradise, and in the lessons inculcated from the history of the Church and Empire represented in those splendid visionary pageants that close the *Purgatorio*, is however regarded by Dante as a means and stepping stone to the moral regeneration and eternal happiness of mankind as is shown in the *Paradiso*. Man, having regained his innocence in the Earthly Paradise and attained to such an ideal life as that represented by the seven lower spheres of Paradise, would no longer need the Imperial Authority "to restrain him in his course by bit and bridle." Though the main political part of the allegory is completed, the poet's political doctrines are still proclaimed as each suitable occasion arises, and his declaration of the sanctity of the Empire and his denunciation of the unworthy holders of the chair of Peter acquire still greater force, when heard amidst the eternal glories of Paradise.

Until the final consummation of the vision, Beatrice is Dante's sole guide throughout the *Paradiso*. In the allegorical sense, for most of the early commentators, she represents Sacred Theology or the Divine Science; for others again she is a symbol of Revelation, for others of co-operating Grace or even of Contemplation. Dr. Döllinger in his lecture on *Dante as a Prophet* says, "Beatrice signifies Theology, not in its abstract meaning as the letter of religious science, but as the living daughter of heaven, the blessed knowledge of God and of holy things, the highest divine gift of grace, enabling us to behold here, as in a glass, that which we shall hereafter gaze on face to face." On the other hand, Dr. Scartazzini regards her as the symbol of the Ecclesiastical Authority, "the symbol of Ecclesiastical Authority in so far as it is in the possession of Divine Revelation." As we are told in the Letter to Can Grande that the poem is *polysensous*, we should perhaps best regard the symbolism of Beatrice as manifold, and sum up her

attributes under the comprehensive phrase Divine Wisdom or Heavenly Wisdom, understanding clearly by Divine Wisdom not the Wisdom of God (which would almost be to identify her with the Word), but "all the wisdom divinely revealed to man to raise him above earthly things and bring him near to God" (Barelli).

This would include the spiritual power or Ecclesiastical Authority of the *De Monarchia*, whose function is to lead mankind according to revelation to "the blessedness of the life eternal which consists in the fruition of the sight of God's countenance, and to which man of his natural powers cannot rise, if he be not aided by the divine light" (*De Monarchia*, iii.16), and also the Divine Science of Theology.

But the literal aspect of Beatrice, the glorified woman of the poet's heart and his poetical ideal of womanhood, cannot be lost sight of, and is recognised by Benvenuto da Imola and other early commentators. It can hardly be doubted that the *Paradiso* is the apotheosis of a real woman though invested with all the Church's power and all Theology's authority; she cannot be identified with any one of these symbolical meanings, because it is her function to include and transcend them all.

In the literal sense—the *essential* Paradise—no allegorical meaning can well be assigned to Beatrice; for in Paradise ecclesiastical authority is meaningless, and things are not known to the saints by theology but by intuition. Still throughout the *Paradiso*, until the final and true vision, it is mainly the allegorical Beatrice presented to us, although here and there we have those lyrical passages that can only refer to the real woman, seeming to break in, as it were, into the allegorical narrative, like the wedding music into the story of the Ancient Mariner, giving an air of reality and truth to the whole. In the final consummation of the vision, when the last altitude of blessedness is

reached, when the spiritual guide has done her work and her place is taken by St. Bernard, all allegory practically ceases, and the real woman is enthroned in the glory she has merited, praying now to the Madonna for her lover's final perseverance:—

> Vedi Beatrice con quanti beati
> Per li miei preghi ti chiudon le mani. [1]

This wondrous combination of the real with the symbolical is exquisitely illustrated in three famous lines from Rossetti's *House of Life*—

> Lady, I fain would tell how evermore
> Thy soul I know not from thy body, nor
> Thee from myself, neither our love from God.

So in Dante's poem we sometimes know not love for the allegorical Beatrice from love for the real Beatrice, nor either from love for the poet's Faith, until all three at last are transfigured, fused and blended in that supreme Love—

> L'Amor che muove il sole e l'altre stelle. [2]

The general arrangement of Dante's Paradise is based upon the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, the theological doctrine of the Mansions of Beatitude, and the theories of the supposed Dionysius the Areopagite (followed by Aquinas) and of St. Bernard concerning the angelic Hierarchies.

Around our globe, the fixed centre of the Universe, move the nine spheres, each of the lower eight enclosed by the sphere above it. Dante's passage, as he ascends from heaven to heaven, is a preparation for the true Paradise. Above these nine moving heavens and enclosing them

[1] See, Beatrice with all the blessed are clasping their hands to thee in support of my prayers.

[2] The Love that moves the sun and all the stars.

around is the 'spaceless Empyrean Heaven of rest and divine peace, the true Paradise, the abode of God and His Angels and saints, a spaceless motionless ocean glowing with the spiritual fire of Love. Although all the blessed without exception have their final seat and home in this Empyrean Heaven, certain groups of saints descend from their thrones into each of the lower spheres to greet Dante in his ascent. For Dante is as the soul that he describes in Book iv of the *Convito* that, in the fourth and last part of her life, "returns to God as to the port whence she set out when she first entered upon the sea of this life":—

"E siccome a colui che viene di lungo cammino, anzi ch'entri nella porta della sua città, gli si fanno incontro i cittadini di quella; così alla nobile anima si fanno incontro quelli cittadini della eterna vita: e così fanno per le sue buone operazioni e contemplazioni, che già essendo a Dio renduta, e astrattasi dalle mondane cose e cogitazioni, vedere le pare coloro che appresso di Dio crede che sieno." [1]

They satisfy the poet's intellectual and spiritual needs, and then return to their places in the Empyrean. "To make manifest the glory of beatitude in these souls," says the Letter to Can Grande, "from them, as from those that behold all truth, many things will be asked which have great utility and delight." Also their temporary apparition in the lower heavens serves Dante as a sensible sign of a

[1] *Convito* iv. 28. "And as he who returns from a long journey, even before he enters the gates of his city, is met by his fellow citizens, so the citizens of the Eternal Life come forth to meet the noble soul, and this because of her good deeds and meditations. So that, being already dedicated to God, and abstracted from worldly things, she seems to see those whom she believes are with Him." Miss K. Hillard's translation.

suprasensible mystery, the wondrous mystery of the Mansions of Beatitude: there are different grades of the glory of beatitude in that Empyrean Heaven where all those blessed ones dwell, yet each is perfectly blessed according to his own capacity. The inequality of perfection in beatitude arises from the different degrees of their knowledge and love, since one intellect sees God more perfectly than another. *Domus est una, sed diversitas est ibi mansionum; quia unum est et summum Bonum, beatitudo et vita omnium, idest Deus ipse.* [1] The spirits that appear in the three lower heavens have the lowest grades of beatitude in the Empyrean. They appear as a sensible sign of this invisible mystery that can only be apprehended by the intellect.

Dante does not behold the saints that appear in the eight lower heavens in their true form. In the lowest sphere of all, the spirits are seen like faint yet most beautiful reflections of the human form; in the heaven of Mercury, those which have the next lowest place are at first just seen in the midst of light which hides them from his view as their joy (their *accidental* joy, to be quite accurate) gets greater; in the third heaven they are completely swathed in concealing light; and, in the higher heavens still, they appear as stars or dazzling splendours. In the seventh Heaven St. Benedict tells him that in the Empyrean he will see them with countenance unveiled, and it follows clearly from the way Dante asks the question that the deficiency is in his own powers of vision, his eyes can more easily distinguish the lower grades of spirits within the shadow of the Earth:—

[1] "The house is one, but there is a diversity of mansions there; for the supreme Good, beatitude and life of all, God Himself, is also one."
PETER THE LOMBARD.

Però ti prego, e tu, padre, m'accerta
S'io posso prender tanta grazia ch'io
Ti veggia con immagine scoverta.
Par. xxii. 58. [1]

the grace, that is, to see spiritual substances with immediate intuition. In the Empyrean he drinks of the river of light which makes the intellect in a measure god-like, and then he can see these blessed beings in their spirit forms, as glorified resemblances of what they were on earth. For it must always be borne in mind that these lower heavens are merely preparations for the vision of the true Paradise, allegories of how man can mount upward step by step in knowledge and love and enjoyment, till he attain to that perfect knowledge, that supreme love, that ineffable enjoyment which is Beatitude in union with the First Cause:—

Still climbing after knowledge infinite
And always moving as the restless spheres,
Until we reach the ripest fruit of all.

There are three main divisions of the *Paradiso;* and of the signs which mark these divisions the first is a *sensible* sign connected with the material Universe—the termination of the earth's shadow; the second a *suprasensible*, a purely spiritual and mystical sign—the shining ladder of gold. For such is the nature of Dante's ascent and intellectual progress, from the things of sense to the mysteries that are above and beyond sense.

In the first two divisions, Dante describes the seven spheres of the seven planets and the seven classes of glorified

[1] Therefore I pray, and thou assure me, father,
If I may so much grace receive, that I
May thee behold with countenance unveiled.
LONGFELLOW.

spirits that appear to him therein. The first division is that of the three heavens to which the earth's shadow was supposed to extend, and which may therefore be regarded as lying still within the shadow of the earth; the spheres of the Moon, of Mercury, and of Venus. The termination of the earth's shadow in the sphere of Venus, the highest of these heavens, is indicated in Canto ix. v. 118—119, after which there is a distinct pause and the poet, as it were, starts afresh in the next Canto. The shadow indicates the shade of earth in the lives of the blessed spirits that appear in these three heavens, spirits whose lives were marred by earthly failings and who have attained a lower degree of beatitude in the Empyrean: the inconstant in their vows, the vainglorious, the lovers. Piccarda and Constance had in part yielded to the violence of others and so broken the monastic vow, the solemn vow of perpetual chastity; desire for fame, rather than love of God, had moved Justinian and Romeo to noble deeds; Cunizza and her companions had fallen for love. On earth the lives of these souls had been marred through yielding to the temptations and snares of the world—inconstancy, vainglory, unlawful love repented of and expiated in time; now in Paradise they appear still within earth's shadow, and their perfection of love and knowledge is diminished.

Beyond and above the earth's shadow is the second division, the four higher spheres of the Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Into these heavens four classes of glorious saints descend to greet Dante; spirits who followed lives of perfection in action or contemplation, the teacher of philosophic truth, the Christian warrior, the just ruler, the rapt ascetic monk or hermit. They appear in these four heavens, not so much to give Dante a sign of the inequality of their merit and hence the inequality of the perfection of their beatitude (as was the case with the spirits seen in the three

lower heavens), but rather as a sign of the different ways in which perfection may be reached and God be served, and so this beatitude attained to. Dante would hardly have wished to represent the Angelical Doctor or St. Anselm as enjoying a less deep vision and less intense love of God than Robert Guiscard or the Emperor Constantine. [1] Now that the earth's shadow has been left behind, the perfection of action and contemplation can be seen and comprehended in relation to Man and to God. The spirits of great teachers, warriors and rulers represent different forms of the glorified active life; the philosopher's pen, the sword of the knight, the sceptre of the monarch are instruments of perfection in the service of God for His chosen people of the old law or for His Bride the Church of the new law. But the active life is a prelude and preparation to the contemplative, the contemplative to the sight of God. In the seventh Heaven, that of Saturn, the spirits of ascetics and hermits appear, contemplatives who fled to the desert or the cell; after which Dante and Beatrice follow them up the Celestial Ladder into the Firmament. This ladder, up and down which the contemplatives pass, the ladder seen by Jacob, stretches up to the last Heaven of all. In one sense it doubtless signifies the heavenly contemplation which is necessary in order to enter into the lofty mysteries above, but it has another and far more universal significance as well. In this universal sense it is to be regarded only as the final rungs of a ladder which reaches up from the shores of the mountain of Purgatory to the supreme Heaven of Heavens, and represents the Universal Church.

[1] Each of these heavens represents a higher state of life than the one below it, but, since there are degrees of bliss in each, it does not follow that any individual spirit in the one should be enjoying more perfect beatitude than another in the lower sphere.

St. Bernard, whom Dante follows a good deal in the *Paradiso* and who becomes his last teacher in the final consummation of the vision, treats at some length the symbolism of Jacob's Ladder:—

"On this ladder are placed all the predestined to eternal life, and everyone who looks for the kingdom of Heaven has a place upon it. This ladder in general is the Church, which partly is still militant on earth and partly already reigns in the heavens. Upon it are three orders of men—worldly, active, contemplative. At the foot of the ladder are the worldly, they who go round about the earth, who seek and love earthly things; in the middle of the ladder are the active, they who cultivate the earth, who sow the word of God in the ears of men; on the summit of the ladder are the contemplative, they who despise earthly things and are already almost in heaven since they dwell in thought amongst heavenly things. These are as the Angels of God, ascending and descending by the ladder, for they ascend through contemplation to God and descend through compassion to their neighbour." [1]

Although the ladder only becomes visible in the seventh Heaven, yet, just as Jacob's Ladder rests upon the earth, so does Dante's upon the shore of the mountain island of Purgatory. When man in the person of Dante issues from the darkness of alienation from God represented by the *Inferno*, he has this vast ladder before him, tending through various degrees of perfection ever upwards. The contumacious and the negligent without the gate, and the spirits in the terraces of the *Purgatorio*, correspond to the worldly and to the lower grades of the active in St. Bernard's scheme. The terraces of Purgatory are the lowest rungs of the

[1] *Liber de modo bene vivendi.* 53. *De activa et contemplativa vita.*

ladder. The spirits in the six lower heavens correspond in varying degrees to the active of St. Bernard, and then we have the contemplative in both Dante and St. Bernard. To this latter height man cannot attain without passing through the others, for the active life is the necessary prelude to the contemplative, since no man can attain perfection in the latter unless he first be perfect in the active life. Therefore throughout the *Purgatorio* and the *Paradiso* Dante is ascending this ladder. Although it is only the topmost rungs that are visible to him, yet in an earlier passage it is indicated to him by Beatrice that it is a ladder he is mounting, and that the lower heavens are merely the stairway of the Eternal Palace:—

> Chè la bellezza mia, che per le scale
> Dell' eterno palazzo più s'accende,
> Com' hai veduto, quanto più si sale.
>
> *Par.* xxi. 7.[1]

There are still steps to be ascended in Dante's Paradise after the seventh sphere, for man proceeds upwards from truth to truth until he attains to the knowledge in which his beatitude consists. Above the celestial ladder is the third division of Paradise in which, as Benvenuto puts it, "Dante describes the three universal orbs of the heavens, that is, the eighth sphere (the heaven of the Fixed Stars) which is called the Firmament, and the ninth sphere (the Crystalline) which is the *Primum Mobile*, and the Empyrean Heaven which is called Paradise; and in these the poet describes the glorious city of God, the Church Triumphant." The seven heavens of the planets may be taken as represent-

[1] Because my beauty, that *along the stairs*
Of the eternal palace more enkindles,
As thou hast seen, the farther we ascend.
LONGFELLOW.

ing the ideal life of man; the eighth and ninth spheres set forth the work of his redemption and the influence of the celestial intelligences upon the Universe; the Empyrean is that blessed existence to which man finally attains. It will be seen that, in the Firmament and the *Primum Mobile*, Dante still beholds things under sensible figures and allegorical veils, for these two heavens are merely a further preparation to the true Paradise and the vision of the Divine Essence. The nine moving spheres form the golden stair-way of God's palace, but the Empyrean is His most glorious presence-chamber.

Each group of saints that descends from the last Heaven into the lower spheres to greet Dante in his ascent has a special relation to the heaven in which it appears, besides its appearing therein to give Dante a visible sign of their degree of bliss or of the perfection of the state of life which they represent. In the first place, they were influenced by these heavens: impressed at their birth by the star, as Cacciaguida says of Can Grande della Scala. Beatrice in *Paradiso* iv. admits some truth in the theory of good and evil influences from the stars and the spheres—

> Tornare a queste ruote
> L'onor dell' influenza e il biasmo. [1]

Thus Cunizza da Romano, who appears in the third Heaven, following in a wrong direction the influence of Venus obtained a lower degree of beatitude; and Cacciaguida in the fifth sphere, by following rightly the influence of Mars, acquired power and strength to practise the virtues proper to a warrior of the Cross, which earned him his place in Paradise. Yet the celestial bodies have no power to

[1] That the honour and the blame of their influence return unto these circles.

deprive man of moral freedom. One of our great Elizabethan poets has said:—

> I am a nobler substance than the stars:
> And shall the baser over-rule the better?
> Or are they better since they are the bigger?
> I have a will and faculties of choice
> To do or not to do; and reason why
> I do or not do this. The stars have none.

And Dante, through the mouth of Marco the Lombard, reconciles the problem of stellar influences with the doctrine of free will in a very similar way in *Purgatorio* xvi.—

> Voi che vivete ogni cagion recate
> Pur suso al cielo, sì come se tutto
> Movesse seco di necessitate.
> Se così fosse, in voi fôra distrutto
> Libero arbitrio, e non fôra giustizia,
> Per ben letizia e per male aver lutto.
> Lo cielo i vostri movimenti inizia;
> Non dico tutti; ma, posto ch'io il dica,
> Lume v'è dato a bene ed a malizia,
> E libero voler, che, se fatica
> Nelle prime battaglie col ciel dura,
> Poi vince tutto, se ben si notrica.
> A maggior forza ed a miglior natura
> Liberi soggiacete, e quella cria
> La mente in voi, che il ciel non ha in sua cura.[1]
>
> *Purg.* xvi. 67.

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[1] Ye who are living every cause refer
Still upward to the heavens, as if all things
They of necessity moved with themselves.
If this were so, in you would be destroyed
Free will, nor any justice would there be
In having joy for good, or grief for evil.
The Heavens your movements do initiate,
I say not all; but granting that I say it,
Light has been given you for good and evil,

Albertus Magnus holds that there is in man a twofold principle of action, nature and the will. Nature indeed is governed by the stars, but the will is free. Notwithstanding this freedom, however, the will will be drawn and inclined by nature unless it steadfastly resists, and, since nature moves with the movements of the stars, the will then, if it does not resist, commences to be inclined by the movements of the stars.

Then, in the second place, each heaven is assigned to the care of one of the nine orders of Angels, and the spirits that appear in each, together with the matters discussed, have probably a special relation with these different angelic orders. [1] The theory that the nine lower heavens were ruled by the nine orders of Angels or celestial intelligences was the usual doctrine of the time, but Dante in addition has assigned each individual sphere to the charge of its own special angelic order,—the heaven of the Moon to the Angels, Mercury to the Archangels, Venus to the celestial Principalities; the Sun to the Powers, Mars to the Virtues, and Jupiter to the Dominations; the heaven of Saturn to the Thrones, the Firmament to the Cherubim, and the Crystalline or *Primum Mobile* to the Seraphim. Sometimes the correspondence between the heaven itself and its celestial movers is more obvious; at other times the doctrines explained seem more closely related, and the spirits of the saints that

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And free volition; which if some fatigue
In the first battles with the heavens it suffers,
Afterwards conquers all, if well 'tis nurtured.
To greater force and to a better nature [God]
Though free ye subject are, and that creates
The mind in you the heavens have not in charge.
LONGFELLOW.

[1] This is especially shown by Professor Lubin in his commentary.

appear to Dante in each heaven seem to be to some extent supplying the places of the Angels, who fell from the special angelical order to whom that particular heaven is assigned, and resemble them to a greater or less extent in the special virtues they exhibit, and so co-operate with them in the government of the Universe. This is more marked in some spheres than in others, but is seen to some extent in all, and can be traced by comparing Dante's heavens and saints with the *Celestial Hierarchies* of the supposed Dionysius and with St. Bernard's Angels in his *De Consideratione*. The poet's theory is perhaps mainly a blending of the views of Dionysius and St. Bernard.

The *Angels* are severally assigned to individuals as guardians, and are also the bearers of tidings of God's bounty to men; being last in the orders of celestial intelligences they are nearer worldly and corporeal objects, and more nearly resemble the human mind. Therefore in the heaven of the Moon the saints still appear in the likeness of the human form, and the matters discussed are concerning vows and free will, as especially relating to the salvation and guidance of individuals. The function of the *Archangels* is to announce messages of special importance and sacredness, and to protect and guide particular nations. Thus in the heaven of Mercury the Emperor Justinian plays the same part towards the Roman people that Michael did for the Jews; and the mystery of the Redemption by the Incarnation is explained to Dante, even as from the Archangels Gabriel was chosen to bear the message to Mary. The *Principalities*, according to St. Bernard, regulate and establish earthly Principalities, and transfer and alter their territories and boundaries. According to Dionysius, they represent the principality of God and draw earthly princes to imitate this by ruling with love, "in order that whatever is in the chief place may exercise lordship with all love and may

join love with lordship." [1] In the sphere of Venus, which the Principalities move, the souls of lovers appear. The influence of the heavens for the proper constitution of society is treated of, and various other matters tending directly or indirectly to induce good government and substitute love for avarice in the hearts of rulers. Carlo Martello speaks to Dante of the Sicilian Vespers, which so altered the territorial dominions of the house of Anjou and severed for a time the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily.

The *Powers* represent the Divine Power and Majesty; they combat the powers of darkness and stay diseases. The great doctors and teachers appear in the sphere of the Sun, and the life work of St. Francis and St. Dominic is described, the two champions of the Church in the same conflict and the healers of the plagues of avarice and heresy by their sovereign remedies of poverty and doctrine. The correspondence between Mars and the *Virtues* is peculiarly close and striking. According to Dionysius, the Virtues imitate the Divine Strength and Fortitude, and their name signifies "a certain manly and masculine strength in them and an unconquered and unconquerable valour." Their special function is to make all things in God "strongly and manfully valiant in chaste and masculine virtue." Christ Himself "taught us that true virtue and strength among men was endurance by enduring gloriously unto death, even the death of the cross. This becoming weak even to death was the strength and fortitude of God." *Risurgi e vinci*, arise and conquer, are the first words that Dante hears on entering Mars. The souls of warriors and knights imitate the divine strength and fortitude by forming a celestial crucifix; and Cacciaguida co-operates with the Virtues by announcing to Dante his

[1] J. H. Lupton, *Joannes Coletus super opera Dionysii:* from which work the other quotations from Dionysius are also taken.

future life, and the endurance and fortitude with which the divine poet must support unjust exile and perform his life's work. Similarly St. Bernard holds that the Virtues work signs and prodigies among the elements to admonish mankind; he sees this indicated in the Gospels where, after describing the signs in the heavens, it is said *virtutes cælorum movebuntur* (Matth. xxiv., Luc. xxi.), that is, the angelic spirits will be moved by whom these things are done: *et tunc parebit signum Filii hominis in cælo.*

The *Dominations* are "an express image of the true and archetypal dominion in God," according to Dionysius: "for the dominion in them is simple and unmingled, and devoid of all subjection, ruling over all, useful to all, a true and unmixed liberty of bearing sway after the form and pattern of God." Their function is to draw all things to imitate this true dominion, so that rulers may bear true lordship in God and men may imitate this dominion by subjection and obedience. Therefore in the heaven of Jupiter the souls of just kings and emperors appear; and they form the imperial Eagle, the emblem of the universal and absolute form of dominion divinely ordained.

The *Thrones* preside over the sphere of Saturn. Upon them God sits. According to St. Bernard, this sitting of God upon the Thrones means supreme tranquillity, most placid serenity, peace which surpasseth all understanding. Fittingly, therefore, do the contemplative saints appear in Saturn. According to Dionysius, the Thrones represent the Divine Steadfastness; by means of these Angels will God execute His judgments, and their special office is purification. The blessed of Saturn, St. Peter Damian and St. Benedict, are most emphatic in their denunciation of corruption and their terrible threats of divine vengeance. The *Cherubim* represent God's Wisdom, their name signifies plenitude of knowledge. "The Cherubim," says St. Bernard, "draw from

the very fountain of wisdom, the mouth of the most High, and pour out the streams of knowledge upon all His citizens." Therefore in the Firmament Christ is seen, and Dante co-operates with the Apostles in spreading the knowledge of God by means of his examination on the theological virtues, and Adam himself appears in whom it is to be believed that—

> Quantunque alla natura umana lece
> Aver di lume, tutto fosse infuso.
> *Par.* xiii.[1]

Thus the Apostles and Adam resemble the Cherubim, but Adam is the last soul seen until the final consummation of the vision. The *Seraphim* that preside over the ninth sphere, the *Primum Mobile*, represent the Love of God. St. Thomas declares that by the gift of grace men can merit such glory as to be assumed to the orders of the Angels, but he also teaches that no Seraphim fell, since they are so named from their excess of burning Love which precludes the possibility of mortal sin (*Summa* i. 63, 7); and so there are no spirits, excepting the Angels themselves, seen by Dante in the ninth Heaven which especially belongs to these Seraphim.

There is a remarkable picture in the National Gallery, ascribed on the authority of Vasari to Sandro Botticelli and representing the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, in which, in circles corresponding to the nine lower spheres of Dante's Paradise, groups of saints are seen mingled with the Angels, evidently co-operating with these celestial intelligences in their work and filling up the vacant places in their ranks. [2]

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[1] Whate'er of light it has to human nature
Been lawful to possess was all infused.
LONGFELLOW.

[2] In spite of Vasari's testimony, this great picture is not usually regarded as a genuine work of Botticelli. Some German critics assign it to a certain Francesco Botticini whose name they suppose Vasari to have confused with that of the great master. Dr. Frizzoni supposes it to

Here, as in Dante's vision, there are no saints among the Seraphim, and, curiously, there seem to be none among the Thrones either, although among the Cherubim appear the two St. Johns, St. Mary Magdalene and St. Peter. It would seem as though the painter held that not only did their excess of burning Love keep the Seraphim from the taint of Lucifer's sin, but that no Angel fell from that celestial order, the Thrones, upon which God sits and in which, according to Dionysius, "there dwells in greater measure God's fixed and settled resolution and unchangeableness of purpose."

The sphere over which the Seraphim, who know most and who love most, preside is Dante's last heaven of preparation. Out of that he ascends with Beatrice into the true Paradise, the Empyrean, which receives most of the glory of God and in which the beatific vision of His Essence is made known. "And because," thus concludes the Letter to Can Grande, "when the Beginning or First which is God has been found, there is nothing further to be sought, since He is the Alpha and Omega, that is, the Beginning and the End, as the vision of John showeth, the treatise ends in God Himself, who is blessed for ever and ever."

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be a pupil of Sandro's who was also influenced by Andrea Verrocchio.

With both picture and poem should be compared Dante's statement in the *Convito* (II. 6) that many Angels were lost out of *all* these orders.

II. THE PRELUDE TO PARADISE.

> " Subtrahere ordinem rebus creatis est eis subtrahere id quod optimum habent; nam singula in seipsis sunt bona: simul autem omnia sunt optima propter ordinem universi. Semper enim totum est melius partibus et finis ipsarum."
>
> ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Contra Gentiles.* iii. 69.

THE first Canto of the *Paradiso* stands somewhat apart from the rest of the canticle and serves as a general prologue to the whole. As a most fitting introduction to the most solemn part of his vision, the poet sings herein of the glory of the First Mover, of the order and beauty of His visible image the Universe, and of the Eternal Law by which all that Universe is governed. Dante's letter to Can Grande della Scala affords a valuable commentary to accompany this Canto, valuable not only for what it contains but also for the method which it suggests for a Dantesque treatment of the rest of the *Paradiso.* This letter, as is well known, is a dedication of the earlier part of the *Paradiso* to the young lord of Verona. Although not among the letters mentioned by Giovanni Villani in his Chronicle, in a passage which is the starting point for all study of the epistles of Dante, it was nevertheless down to the end of last century the only letter ascribed to Dante which was known in its original Latin form, or at least in what purported to be such. Much doubt has been cast upon its authenticity. It is said to have been first made

known by Filippo Villani, Boccaccio's successor in the chair of Dante at Florence, in the course of lectures he delivered in 1391; but as many of the earlier commentators seem frequently to be taking passages from the letter, which nevertheless they do not mention, it has been suggested that in reality this famous document may have been fabricated from these very commentaries. On the whole, however, the balance of probability seems in favour of the letter being genuine, and its importance and value is admitted even by some of those critics who dispute its entire authenticity. The letter (I will call it Dante's for convenience, in spite of the doubt), after drawing the distinction between the literal sense and the allegorical sense, defining the subject of the poem (in the literal sense, the state of souls after death; in the allegorical meaning, "man in so far as by free will meriting and demeriting he is subject to justice rewarding or punishing"), defending its title of *Comedy* and stating the end it has in view (to remove those living in this life from their state of misery and bring them to the state of felicity), proceeds to divide this Cantica into *Prologue* and *Executive part*—the latter commencing the main action of the *Paradiso* and running on directly from the last Canto of the *Purgatorio*. The Prologue of 36 lines is further divided into *Proem* (verses 1—12) and *Invocation* (verses 13—36), and is fully commented upon in the letter; but, after all, one cannot but feel that the method is a somewhat dry scholastic way of dealing with what is not merely philosophy but essentially poetry, and poetry of so high an order that Shelley, in what was almost his last letter, cites this opening of the *Paradiso* as a test for genuine admiration of great poetry.

> La gloria di Colui che tutto muove
> Per l'universo penetra, e risplende
> In una parte più, e meno altrove.

Nel ciel che più della sua luce prende
Fu'io; e vidi cose che ridire
Nè sa nè può qual di lassù discende;
Perchè, appressando sè al suo disire,
Nostro intelletto si profonda tanto,
Che retro la memoria non può ire.
Veramente quant' io del regno santo
Nella mia mente potei far tesoro,
Sarà ora materia del mio canto.

Par. i. 1.[1]

Dante regards these twelve lines as a rhetorical proem, giving a foretaste of what is to be said so as to prepare the reader's mind; and, holding with Cicero that three things are required for a good beginning, especially when something very wonderful is to be dealt with, he proceeds to show that, when he declares that he himself was in that first heaven and will speak of the things which he saw there and of which he had power to retain the memory as a priceless treasure within his mind, he renders his readers *well disposed*, because he is going to treat of the things that are most alluring to human desires, namely the joys of Paradise. Their marvellous character too should secure *attention*, for what can be more arduous and sublime than the con-

[1] The glory of Him who moveth everything
Doth penetrate the universe, and shine
In one part more and in another less.
Within that heaven which most his light receives
Was I, and things beheld which to repeat
Nor knows, nor can, who from above descends;
Because in drawing near to its desire
Our intellect ingulphs itself so far,
That after it the memory cannot go.
Truly whatever of the holy realm
I had the power to treasure in my mind
Shall now become the subject of my song.

LONGFELLOW.

ditions of the celestial Kingdom. And thirdly *docility* is claimed by the possibility of the enterprise: if he had the power to retain these things in his mind, other men will have the same power and his readers may hope to be able to follow him.

In the same strain he explains and demonstrates his doctrine, that the glory of the First Mover, the Divine Goodness and Wisdom and Power, shines in every corner of the Universe, and that the different created things are more or less imperfect images of the Divine glory. Dante's method is characteristic. He first endeavours to prove his belief by reason, by a long scholastic process, and then appeals to authority. In Dante's minor works he is rather fond of this method of appealing to authority after having employed reason—with him it practically consists, as here, of quoting a series of texts from sacred and profane authors bearing upon the subject under discussion. There is an extreme example at the close of the treatise *De Aqua et Terra*, sometimes ascribed to Dante but now usually regarded as apocryphal, where authority is urged to end a purely scientific dispute and texts are cited which, according to ordinary notions, can hardly be said to bear upon the matter at all. Even for the character of this first Heaven (or last), the Empyrean, flaming with spiritual fire of love or holy charity and receiving most of the divine light, he must needs have recourse after reasoning to authority: Aristotle and St. Paul and the prophet Ezekiel. So also for the exaltation of the human intellect beyond human conditions and consequent falling short of the memory, and general insufficiency of human powers to relate the vision. His final appeal to authority has been regarded as indicating the authors upon whom the *Paradiso* is mainly based. After examples from the Scriptures, he adds: "And where these do not suffice for the invidious, let them read Richard

of St. Victor in his book *On Contemplation;* let them read Bernard in his book *On Consideration;* let them read Augustine *On the Quantity of the Soul*, and they will not be invidious."

In the noble invocation to Apollo in the 24 lines that follow, Apollo is doubtless to be regarded as a symbol either of Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, or of the Divine Grace of which the Sun is the fitting type. It is the poet's prayer for divine inspiration to complete this third most arduous part of his work. Dante remarks that, while rhetoricians can be content with a proem, poets in addition have need of a great invocation, since they are seeking from the heavenly substances something above the common mode of men, a certain almost divine gift (*quasi divinum quoddam munus*). Certainly no man ever held a higher or more noble conception of the poet's function than Dante. As his allegory of the two summits of Parnassus indicates, up to now human knowledge and wisdom had been sufficient, but now he needs supernatural wisdom and divine science as well. One of the passages of this invocation almost appears again in the last Canto of the *Paradiso*, stripped of all allegory in that supreme moment: the power divine of Apollo is there revealed as the Light Supreme of the Blessed Trinity. Here it runs—

O divina virtù, se mi ti presti
Tanto che l'ombra del beato regno
Segnata nel mio capo io manifesti,
Venir vedra'mi al tuo diletto legno
E coronarmi allor di quelle foglie
Che la materia e tu mi farai degno.
Par. i. 22. [1]

[1] O power divine, lend'st thou thyself to me
So that the shadow of the blessed realm
Stamped in my brain I can make manifest,

but there it will become—

O somma Luce, che tanto ti levi
Dai concetti mortali, alla mia mente
Ripresta un poco di quel che parevi,
E fa' la lingua mia tanto possente
Ch'una favilla sol della *tua* gloria
Possa lasciare alla futura gente.
Par. xxxiii. 67. [1]

The Prologue being ended, the main action of the *Paradiso* begins. Dante and Beatrice are standing in the Earthly Paradise, presumably still with the seven maidens who symbolise the theological and moral virtues. We hear no more of Matilda and Statius who had played their parts in that glorious scene. Lethe and Eunoë have been passed and tasted of, those two mystical streams that, springing from the same fountain, take away memory of sin and restore the recollection of good works, even as the same ray of divine grace expels sin and brings to light former works done in charity and accepted by God. Dante is now indeed purified and prepared for his ascent—

Puro e disposto a salire alle stelle.

In order to give full solemnity to the account of the ascent to Heaven which he alone of mortal men since St. Paul

---

Thou'lt see me come unto thy darling tree,
And crown myself thereafter with those leaves
Of which the theme and thou shall make me worthy.
LONGFELLOW.

[1] O Light supreme, that dost so far uplift thee
From the conceits of mortals, to my mind
Of what thou didst appear re-lend a little,
And make my tongue of so great puissance,
That but a single sparkle of thy glory
It may bequeath unto the future people.
Ibid.

had accomplished, he proceeds to tell us how it was at the noblest and most fitting season of the year and the day. The sun rises to mortals from different points of the horizon, but most favourably at the (spring) equinox, at the point where four circles intersect and form with their intersection three crosses. Then indeed the sun best impresses vital operations in nature with its heat and light—

> La mondana cera
> Più a suo modo tempera e suggella.
> *Par.* i.[1]

Dante is not actually describing sunrise on the mountain; he is merely making a general astronomical statement concerning sunrise at the spring equinox, the time of his ascent, and the influence of the sun at that season (*Paradiso* i. 37—42). Allegorically the four circles are the cardinal virtues, Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance; the three crosses are the theological virtues, Faith, Hope and Charity. The former perfect man according to the capacity of human nature, the latter supernaturally to set him in the way of supernatural happiness. Dante would therefore say that the grace of God shines most upon the soul where the cardinal virtues, which attain to human reason, are united with the theological virtues whose object is God; or possibly, as Benvenuto puts it, that God the Sun of Justice and Light of the World rises to men through diverse ways, but especially through the four cardinal and three divine virtues. Remembering too how Dante rather connects the cardinal virtues with the Empire as the theological with the Church, it is not too fanciful to suppose that he may also have meant that, in that age of conflicting claims of Pope and

[1] The mundane wax
Tempers and stamps more after its own fashion.

Emperor, God shone most upon a soul prepared to fulfil the duty of rendering to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's.

> Fatto avea di là mane e di qua sera
> Tal foce, e quasi tutto era là bianco
> Quello emisperio e l'altra parte nera,
> Quando Beatrice in sul sinistro fianco
> Vidi rivolta e riguardar nel sole.
> *Par.* i. 43. [1]

Such was the season of his ascent and such was the state of his soul at the time, when Beatrice turned to gaze upon the sun with the eyes of speculative and contemplative theology. The sun rising from the most favourable point of the horizon had made morning there (*di là*) on the mountain of Purgatory (the morning hours sunrise to midday) and the evening hours (midday to sunset) here (*di qua*) in the ordinary world. The western hemisphere was almost all bright and the hemisphere of the earth dark; the poet's soul was all illuminated with the divine grace and prepared to gaze upon things eternal and divine, whereas the souls of men upon earth were mostly dark in ignorance and sin and immersed in worldly cares. Indeed those virtues, the four cardinal and three theological, were not only vivid in his soul, but had even taken visible form as the seven maidens to accompany him to the wondrous waters of Eunoë, holding in their hands the seven lights—

> Che son sicuri d'Aquilone e d'Austro. [2]

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[1] Such a passage had made morning there and evening here, and there that hemisphere was almost all bright and the other part dark, when I saw Beatrice turned towards the left-hand side and gazing upon the sun.

[2] "Which are secure from Aquilon and Auster." *Purg.* xxxii.—that is, lights that no assaults of the winds can extinguish.

It was at midday that Eunoë had been reached and its waters partaken of. At once, purified and prepared, Dante had returned to the side of his Beatrice. *When* does he now see her gazing upon the sun and rise up with her into the Kingdom of Heaven? Almost all the early commentators, and the majority of even the modern ones, say that it was at sunrise on the next day, and offer various suggestions of how the eighteen hours that intervene may have been spent. It is more probable, however, that there has been no such interval, but that, as soon as Dante returned from Eunoë, Beatrice turned and gazed upon the sun. The executive part of this Canto would therefore be an immediate continuation of the last Canto of the *Purgatorio;* the narrative has been merely interrupted for the sake of that most solemn prologue, a hymn of thanksgiving for his purification, for the poet to sing of the glory of God and give greater solemnity to the close of his ecstatic pilgrimage. The following are the chief arguments in support of this view, that the ascent is at midday and that there has been no interval of time between *Purgatorio* xxxiii and *Paradiso* i.[1]

(1) For one hemisphere to be almost all illuminated and the other dark, it seems necessary that it should be midday in the former.

(2) Such a delay would be absolutely contrary to Dante's proceedings throughout the poem. All through we find him hastening on to his goal with all the speed he can.

(3) The interval would be in absolute contradiction to the very words of Beatrice in this same Canto, lines 136—141.

[1] See especially the following: *Vaccheri and Bertacchi, La Visione di D.A. considerata nello spazio e nel tempo.* Torino. 1881; *G. Agnelli, Topocronografia del viaggio Dantesco.* Milano. 1891. Cf. also Dr. Moore's *Time-references in the Divine Comedy.* Dante distinctly tells us that the sun *had* risen at that point and was illuminating the whole western hemisphere.

Maraviglia sarebbe in te, se privo
D'impedimento giù ti fossi assiso
Come a terra quieto fuoco vivo.[1]

If Dante had really lingered in the Earthly Paradise for these hours, he would have violated what he declares to be the form and order of the Universe, and the words of Beatrice would be either meaningless or the bitterest of sarcasm.

(4) Dante entered Hell at nightfall, and he reached the shores of Purgatory very early in the morning. It might perhaps seem that sunrise would be the most fitting time for his ascent to Paradise. Now he has told us that the season of the year was the noblest and most virtuous, and surely the hour of the day should correspond with this. It follows very clearly from two passages in the *Convito* (Bk. iv. 23) that for Dante the noblest and most virtuous hour of the day is not sunrise, but midday. In that famous chapter, where he likens the life of man to an arch and holds that for perfect natures the summit of the arch is in the 35th year, for it pleased our Saviour to die in the 34th year of His age, because He desired to remain in our life up to its culmination, he adds:—

"E ciò ne manifesta l'ora del giorno della sua morte, chè volle quella consomigliare colla vita sua; onde dice Luca, che era quasi ora sesta quando morìo, che è a dire lo colmo del dì; onde si può comprendere per quello quasi, che al trentacinquesimo anno di Cristo era il colmo della sua età." [2]

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[1] Marvel it would be in thee, if, deprived
Of hindrance, thou were seated down below,
As if on earth the living fire were quiet.
LONGFELLOW.

[2] "And the hour of His death makes this evident to us, for He wished this to correspond with His life; wherefore Luke says that it

It is in this 35th year of his life that Dante has his vision, and he clearly wishes us to notice such analogies. So also he was dead and buried, so to speak, in Hell part of three days like our Lord in the tomb. Just as Christ died at the *colmo del dì*, so that should be the hour for the commencement of the consummation of Dante's vision. And again, further on, he says: "*La sesta ora, cioè il mezzo dì, è la più nobile di tutto il dì, e la più vertuosa.*"[1]

(5) Finally let us turn again to the *Purgatorio*, to the words that Virgil addressed to Dante when he awoke on that morning after the purging fire had been passed through. (*Purg.* xxvii. 115—117):—

> Quel dolce pome, che per tanti rami
> Cercando va la cura de' mortali,
> *Oggi* porrà in pace le tue fami.[2]

This sweet apple cannot be the Earthly Paradise, for blessedness of this life is not Dante's last end and therefore could not put at peace all his desires. Neither can it be the sight of Beatrice herself in that gorgeous pageant, for, after all, Beatrice is merely the guide to lead him on to the supreme and universal good. "Nothing," says St. Thomas, "can set the will of man to rest but universal good, which is not found in anything created but in God alone. Hence God alone can fill the breast of man."

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was about the sixth hour when He died; that is to say, the culmination of the day. Whence we may understand that Christ was almost in His thirty-fifth year, that is, at the culmination of His life."

MISS K. HILLARD'S translation.

[1] "The sixth hour, that is, noon, is the most noble of the whole day, and has the most virtue." *Ibid.*

[2] That apple sweet, which through so many branches
The care of mortals goeth in pursuit of,
To-day shall put in peace thy hungerings.

LONGFELLOW.

It was the last day of Dante's pilgrimage of which the morning broke on the steps that led up to the Earthly Paradise. *Oggi*, to-day, was the word he heard from his master's lips before he resigned his guidance. And what a wondrous day it was to be! heralded by the dream of Rachel and Leah, followed by the glorious pageant of the Church with the reunion with Beatrice, and the mystical visions of the past, present and future of the Church and Empire. He had mounted the last steps as the sun rose, it was midday as he stooped to drink of Eunoë, but Dante was to see no evening of that day. The sun of the last day of his pilgrimage rose on the Earthly Paradise, but the poet passed beyond it into Eternity, and was with Beatrice—

suso in cielo
Cotanto gloriosamente accolto.

As he ascends, so much is the light increased that it seemed that day to day was added, as if God had adorned the heaven with another sun. This apparent addition of day to day is the divine answer to Dante's invocation. According to St. Augustine, day is a figure of knowledge; and by this addition of day to day is mystically signified the addition of divine knowledge to human knowledge; both peaks of Parnassus are needed for this last achievement. [2] Dante turns

[1] On high in heaven so gloriously received. *Par.* xi. 11.

[2] Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa. 1. q. 74. a. 2.*: "According to St. Augustine, by day is meant the knowledge of the angelical mind, so that the first day is the knowledge of the first divine work, the second day the knowledge of the second work, and so for the others. Angelical knowledge can properly and truly be called *day*, since light, which is the cause of day, is properly to be found in spiritual things —*Cognitio autem angelica proprie et vere dies nominari potest, cum lux, quae est causa diei, proprie in spiritualibus inveniatur.*"

his gaze from the sun upon Beatrice, for she is invested with the ecclesiastical authority appointed by God to lead mankind to eternal life in accordance with revelation, and by means of theology to interpret the mysteries which would otherwise dazzle our intellectual eyesight.

Nel suo aspetto tal dentro mi fei,
Qual si fe' Glauco nel gustar dell'erba,
Che il fe' consorto in mar degli altri dei.
Trasumanar significar per verba
Non si poria; però l'esempio basti
A cui esperienza grazia serba.
S'io era sol di me quel che creasti
Novellamente, Amor che il ciel governi,
Tu il sai, che col tuo lume mi levasti. [1]

Benvenuto da Imola waxes enthusiastic concerning this comparison which Dante makes of himself to Glaucus the fisherman, and indeed it is an apt one. Glaucus tasted of the grass and entering into the sea became a God; so Dante tasting these new spiritual delights enters into the sea of Paradise, contemplating things eternal and divine, and his mind becomes in a certain way god-like. (Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles.* ii. 2. and *Summa Theologica* i. 12. 5.). Benvenuto works out the analogy in many quaint ways, showing how Dante too was a fisherman, fishing for

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[1] Such at her aspect (I) inwardly became
As Glaucus, tasting of the herb that made him
Peer of the other gods beneath the sea.
To represent transumanise in words
Impossible were; the example, then, suffice
Him for whom Grace the experience reserves.
If I was merely what of me thou newly
Createdst, Love, who governest the heaven,
Thou knowest, who didst lift me with thy light!
LONGFELLOW.

and taking captive the souls of men with his song, who after fishing in the waters of Hell and Purgatory had at last come to a green meadow where never any other poet had been—the Earthly Paradise. There he landed his fishes who, tasting the new grass or doctrine, entered the sea. And then this new Glaucus, having left the earth, becomes like Glaucus first a semi-god, and then, after tasting of those sweet waters of the rivers of the Earthly Paradise, becomes a god in the great sea of Paradise with the other souls of the blessed, a partaker now in divinity and immortality.

Pointing a moral in his characteristic way from the impossibility of representing transumanise in words, and uttering the doubt with St. Paul whether he was in the body or out of the body, Dante continues his account of their ascent, swifter than lightning. A vast sea of light and flame seems around him, either because the sphere of fire has been reached or merely from the reflection of the light of the sun; and a wondrous harmony is heard, the perpetual music of the heavenly spheres caused by their continually revolving, swiftest of all the *Primum Mobile* from the fervent longing that each part has to be conjoined with the divinest Heaven, from the desire of God—therefore a perpetual hymn of divine love and longing. The notion of the music of the spheres was taught by Pythagoras, but rejected by Aristotle. Dante perhaps took it from Cicero's *Dream of Scipio.* Benvenuto is somewhat concerned at Dante's doctrine. He clearly finds it a hard saying, and, holding with Aristotle *non concedendum quod musica sit in cœlo*, thinks Dante must mean something else: "Perhaps by this harmony our author understands the wonderful proportion of the heaven, which ever moveth uniformly so that every part replies to every part," but, although himself holding that Albertus Magnus has conclusively proved that

no sound is made in heaven, Benvenuto thinks it safest to explain that, even if Dante really meant that there was music in heaven, it was a view that had plenty to be said for it, for great authors both before and after Aristotle, such as Pythagoras and Plato, Tully and Boëthius, affirm this thing for certain.

So rapid is their ascent that Dante does not at first perceive that they have left the earth, and then, on learning from Beatrice that he is returning to Heaven from whence the soul departed when first created by God, he would further know from her how it is that he is transcending these light bodies, air, fire and ether. He cannot comprehend—so the *Ottimo* interprets this passage—how human nature acquires beatitude and can possess such grace as Paradise. Beatrice answers with a profound philosophical discourse concerning the form and order of the Universe, equally full of poetry and of the devout wisdom of the schoolmen.

> Le cose tutte quante
> Hann' ordine tra loro; e questo è forma
> Che l'universo a Dio fa simigliante.
> Qui veggion l'alte creature l'orma
> Dell'eterno valore, il quale è fine
> Al quale è fatta la toccata norma. [1]

Certain words of St. Thomas might be taken as the text of this discourse of Beatrice: "To take away order from created beings is to take away what is best in them; the

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[1] All things whate'er they be
Have order among themselves, and this is form,
That makes the universe resemble God.
Here do the higher creatures see the foot-prints
Of the Eternal Power, which is the end
Whereto is made the law already mentioned.
LONGFELLOW.

individual things are good in themselves, yet all of them together are best because of the order of the Universe, for the whole is always better than the parts and is indeed the end to which they tend." All properties and actions of corporeal substances, all things that exist in heaven and earth, inanimate and living creatures with all their capabilities, mankind in their relations to each other and to things below and above them, in short, all nature, is ordained to make up the order and beauty of the Universe, the form that makes the Universe like to God and from which intellectual and rational beings (*l'alte creature*) gather the image of the perfection of God, who is the end that all creatures seek. Just as the products of any art represent and give us some notion of the art itself, so, by meditating upon what God has made, we can to some extent contemplate the Divine Wisdom. For God brought things into being by His Wisdom, and upon the things that He has made there is stamped a certain communication or likeness of the Divine Wisdom. The beauty of the Universe depends upon its order, and the Universe is the image of God, for in creating it He took the *exemplar* or idea from within Himself.

Nell' ordine ch'io dico sono accline
Tutte nature per diverse sorti
Più al principio loro e men vicine;
Onde si movono a diversi porti
Per lo gran mar dell' essere, e ciascuna
Con istinto a lei dato che la porti.
Questi ne porta il fuoco in vêr la luna;
Questi nei cuor mortali è permotore;
Questi la terra in sè stringe ed aduna.
Nè pur le creature che son fuore
D'intelligenzia, quest' arco saetta,
Ma quelle c'hanno intelletto ed amore. [1]

[1] In the order that I speak of are inclined
All natures, by their destinies diverse,
More or less near unto their origin;

This is practically Dante's poetical statement of what scholastic philosophy calls *The Eternal Law*, which a modern writer on the subject defines thus:—"That God wills to bind His creatures to certain lines of action, not arbitrary lines, but the natural lines of each creature's being," or, "That every creature, rational and irrational, shall act according to its kind or nature" (J. Rickaby, *Moral Philosophy*). In *Purgatorio* xvii., Dante through Virgil enunciates a universal law of love:—

> Nè Creator nè creatura mai,
> Cominciò ei, figliuol, fu senza amore
> O naturale o d'animo.[1]

and all creatures from inanimate stones up to men and Angels are included by Dante in this golden law of love. This is of course a part of the Eternal Law, which Aquinas tells us is the sovereign plan of government existing in the mind of God, as director of all acts and movements, moving all things to their due end: the law to which all the movements and actions of all nature are subject. Over this great sea of being, all created things seek their diverse ports, a *bonum*, the end for which they are ordered and disposed, whether they have knowledge or have not. But although Dante here and a few lines further on makes use of the

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> Hence they move onward unto ports diverse
> O'er the great sea of being; and each one
> With instinct given it which bears it on.
> This bears away the fire towards the moon;
> This is in mortal hearts the motive power;
> This binds together and unites the earth.
> Nor only the created things that are
> Without intelligence, this bow shoots forth,
> But those that have both intellect and love.
>
> LONGFELLOW.

[1] "Neither Creator nor creature, son," he commenced,
"Was ever without love, natural or rational."

simile of a bow and its arrows, he would not have us suppose that even inanimate things are merely impelled to an end from without, as an arrow is aimed at a mark by the archer, but that every thing has a natural inclination from within, because it has received from its director or mover some form by which that inclination or direction is determined. This is what he calls the *istinto a lei dato che la porti*, the principle of inclination which God gives to natural things, a draw, uniform in itself but differenced by the nature or form upon which it acts, by which He draws all things that He has created back to Himself.

Now Dante, in the above lines (115—120), indicates the three ways in which created things are said by scholastic philosophers to seek their end, the *bonum* to which they tend.[1] The inanimate or insensible bodies (*il fuoco, la terra*), being the furthest removed from God by reason of their materiality, seek the end to which they are inclined not by moving themselves but by that inherent principle of inclination, which is determined by the substantial form. The sensitive natures or brutes (*i cuor mortali*), being a step nearer to God, have this natural movement further determined by sense images, but the inclination that—

nei cuor mortali è permotore

is not in their own power. They do not seek their end freely, but the inclination is determined from without. Rational beings (*Quelle c'hanno intelletto ed amore*) are the nearest to God, and have in their own intellectual knowledge the known *bonum* that inclines them. They include

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[1] Cf. Cornoldi, *The Physical System of St. Thomas*, translated by E. H. Dering.

The student of Dante will find this book a most excellent introduction to the scholastic notions underlying the Divine Comedy.

what the inanimate and sensitive natures possess, but besides they have the inclination in their own power and freely move themselves. These three principles of motion are called the *natural* appetite, the *sensitive* appetite, and the *rational* appetite, which last is the *human will* and is freely determined by the reason. But upon this terrible power of the rational nature to incline or not incline, this apparent power to resist the Eternal Law, Beatrice has yet another word to say before she closes her discourse.

Vero è che come forma non s'accorda
Molte fiate alla intenzion dell'arte,
Perch'a risponder la materia è sorda;
Così da questo corso si diparte
Talor la creatura, c'ha potere
Di piegar, così pinta, in altra parte
(E sì come veder si può cadere
Fuoco di nube), se l'impeto primo
A terra è torto da falso piacere. [1]

La creatura in question is of course the rational being, and this *potere* to turn aside is that power which it has to incline or not incline. Just as sometimes the form of the statue does not adequately represent the idea that the artist has in his mind because of the defective nature of the material he employs, so men, to whom the Creator has given free will, deceived by false pleasure, do not follow

[1] True is it, that as oftentimes the form
Accords not with the intention of the art,
Because in answering is matter deaf,
So likewise from this course doth deviate
Sometimes the creature, who the power possesses
Though thus impelled, to move some other way
(In the same wise as one may see the fire
Fall from a cloud), if the first impetus
Earthward is wrested by some false delight.
LONGFELLOW.

the inclination that God has given them to impel them *in segno lieto*—to a joyful mark. Rectitude of the will is as requisite for the attainment of man's last end as a due disposition of the matter is needed for the attainment of the form. Irrational creatures have not power to turn aside to evil the natural inclination or instinct, and so they never depart from the way to which they are moved by the Creator. But man has liberty; he is subject to the Eternal Law, not only as irrational creatures are as being set in motion by Divine Providence, but also as having some knowledge of good. Although necessarily urged by the nature that God has given him to the universal good, yet man's will can freely turn aside to a particular good which in reality may be false and contrary to the divine will. Cornoldi in his commentary gives a very apt illustration: "A ship is moved towards the west by the wind, but the pilot by turning the helm can freely direct it to this or that port of the west."

Thus in rational creatures sin can for a time defeat the Eternal Law, but Beatrice has no need to explain to Dante how this breach in the order of the Universe is made up on the side of suffering, "the wicked suffering what the Eternal Law dictates concerning them to that exact extent to which they fail to do what is in accordance with that law" (St. Thomas[1]). All this has been already fully investigated in his passage through the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*. All that is passed. He has now only to study the condition of the good, "those who are perfectly subject to the Eternal Law as ever acting according to it." Thus having finished her discourse Beatrice bids him note that, now that he is purified and prepared, this ascent of his is natural and inevitable, just as much a part of the order of

[1] *Summa* I—2. q. 93. a. 6. (J. Rickaby, *Aquinas Ethicus.*)

the Universe as the inevitable rush of a torrent from a lofty mountain down to the valley below or the mounting aloft of living flame to the sphere of fire. It is in accordance with the Eternal Law, that plan of Divine Wisdom moving all things to their due end, that the purified soul as a living flame mounts upwards on the wings of love to the universal good which is found in God alone.

Chapter II.

WITHIN EARTH'S SHADOW.

I. THE HEAVEN OF THE MOON.

> "Totus infernus, totus mundus, totus denique militiæ cælestis exercitus in unum concurrat, in hoc unum conjuret, unus ex libero arbitrio consensus in qualicumque re invito extorqueri non valet."
>
> Richard of St. Victor, *De Statu Interioris Hominis.*

One of the striking features of the *Paradiso* is the predominance of the lyrical element, the frequent introduction of exquisite lyrical passages amidst its theology and philosophy. Such passages in the Divine Comedy are analogous to what Coleridge called the "lyrical interbreathings" in the Elizabethan drama. Thus, as prelude to the heaven of the Moon, the second Canto opens with a lyrical exordium in which Dante warns his readers of the difficulty and lofty character of the *Paradiso*, lays stress upon the need of preparatory knowledge, and promises wonders in store for those that can follow him. The little boat (*navicella*), with which he had passed over the cruel sea of the *Inferno* and the better water of the *Purgatorio*, has become the *legno*, the ship sufficient and strong enough to voyage upon the deep ocean of Paradise. Minerva and Apollo, Wisdom and Divine Grace, inspire and guide him, and the Muses point

out the way. It is noteworthy how forcibly Dante insists upon his readers keeping close to his doctrine—

Servando mio solco
Dinanzi all'acqua che ritorna eguale:

"Keeping in my wake before the water that is growing smooth again," that is, as close as possible in the path of my keel: a distinct warning to commentators to resist the temptation of reading their own ideas into his poem.

Beatrice gazing upwards and Dante gazing upon her, they ascend with the utmost rapidity, borne up by man's concreated and perpetual thirst for God, and are received into the eternal pearl of the Moon. In each heaven, as Dante ascends, he has problems and difficulties of various kinds to be solved by Beatrice, or by the spirits that appear to him. In each case these questions are not asked casually, but are very closely correspondent to the character of the heaven and its place in the whole celestial scheme. The heavens are as steps after steps in knowledge leading up to Universal Truth; and therefore in this lowest sphere the preliminary question concerning the dark spots in the Moon seeks the solution of a merely physical difficulty, an explanation of a visible phenomenon, this being regarded as a first step upon the ladder that leads up to the most sublime mysteries of faith. Further, by the mystical explanation which Beatrice offers of this natural phenomenon, the poet would, in this first step of his ascent to the things above sense, warn man against too much confidence in the guidance of the senses:—

Ella sorrise alquanto, e poi: S'egli erra
L'opinion, mi disse, dei mortali,
Dove chiave di senso non disserra,

Certo non ti dovrien punger gli strali
D'ammirazion omai; poi dietro ai sensi
Vedi che la ragione ha corte l'ali
Par. ii. 52.[1]

It is not wonderful that men's opinions should be erroneous concerning suprasensible matters; since, even where you have the guidance of the senses, you are led to conclusions which can easily be shown to be wrong. Dante, therefore, puts forward to be confuted by Beatrice an opinion expressed in the *Convito* where, following Averrhoes, he had attributed these spots to relative rarity and density of the Moon's substance. The actual question of the Moon's spots is of slight importance compared to the principle at stake; but Dante regards his art-work as a mirror which must be pure and perfect to reflect the divine truth and beauty, nor will he allow a single speck of dust, however minute, to rest upon it. Like the Moon, the eighth or Stellar Heaven, the Firmament, shows degrees of brilliancy in its parts; and these constellations have virtues for influencing mankind and the Universe below them, which differ not only in degree but in kind. For instance, Dante himself in *Paradiso* xxii. attributes his own talents to the great virtue of a particular constellation (the Gemini); and, in the (probably apocryphal) treatise *De Aquâ et Terra*, the elevation of our earth above the surface of the water is ascribed to the elevating influence of the stars in another region of this same heaven. Such different effects cannot come from one

[1] Somewhat she smiled; and then, "If the opinion
Of mortals be erroneous," she said,
"Where'er the key of sense doth not unlock,
Certes, the shafts of wonder should not pierce thee
Now, forasmuch as, following the senses,
Thou seest that the reason hath short wings."
LONGFELLOW.

sole specific virtue, more or less diffused throughout and more or less brightly revealing itself, as Dante's theory of "rare and dense" would imply; but must proceed from specifically diverse virtues, the fruits of different formal principles. And, again, even reasoning founded upon common experience and simple experiment proves the theory to be absolutely untenable.

The true explanation which Beatrice gives is based upon a passage in the *Dialogues* of St. Gregory (a work closely followed in several places of the *Paradiso*): "Nothing can be disposed of in this visible world, but by another nature which is invisible." From the ninth Heaven or *Primum Mobile*, revolving within the Empyrean and receiving virtue from it to direct the movements of all the Universe which it encloses and to impress corporeal substances with their forms, the Stellar Heaven receives this manifold and universal virtue which it distributes differently among its different stars, which are distinct from its substance and yet held fast therein. Analogously, the seven lower spheres have each a special distinguishing virtue, which they receive from above and dispose, with due difference, to its proper end. But these heavens can no more act of themselves than the hammer could produce work without the craftsman; for their motion and power are merely as hammers in the hands of the celestial intelligences, to carry out the Divine Plan in the government of the Universe and to stamp the Divine Ideas into the material creation, as a seal stamps figures upon wax, for "every intelligence is full of forms." From the Cherubim, who rule the eighth Heaven, the constellations receive their diverse virtues; and the stars shine with different light and brilliancy, because each has received a different communication from the multiform virtue of these angelic motors. This virtue or power received from the Cherubim is the animating principle of the Stellar Heaven; and the

stars and constellations are its limbs and organs, differing and having different specific virtues even as our limbs and faculties have different functions. A particular application of this theory to the Angels and the sphere of the Moon, over which they preside, will solve Dante's little difficulty about the bright and dark places in the Moon, for they are due to a different reception of the simple specific virtue of these celestial beings.

This somewhat arid discussion serves but as prelude to a vision so full of pathetic beauty and human interest as hardly to be surpassed even in the Divine Comedy, with, just here and there, a scholastic phrase thrown in like the quaint accessories of a mediæval picture. Within the eternal pearl of the Moon, against the background of that strange bright shining cloud, faint forms appear, like reflections in polished and transparent glass, or as seen through clear and shallow waters; dim, yet divinely glorious figures of beautiful women. Angelico's saints and Angels are even less spiritualised and less beyond the ken of earth. Dante's mistake, in supposing them reflections and turning round to see, affords Beatrice another opportunity of rebuking his application of physical explanations to supernatural things and his confidence in the guidance of the senses; for this is one of the first lessons that man must learn in his contemplation of sacred things, if he would ascend step by step through sensible signs to the things above and beyond sense. These are not reflections but real spirits, *vere sustanzie*, the souls of women who in life failed to keep perfectly their monastic vow. They still retain, as it were, a remnant of earth in their appearance; at least they are not clothed in the dazzling radiance of the higher spheres, and Dante's eyes can more readily comprehend their degree of bliss. There is a certain exquisite analogy between the nature of the matter discussed upon Dante's arrival at this

first Heaven and the apparition of this first group of blessed spirits; it was merely a physical difficulty that was to be solved, yet it had led him to a mystical theory of the angelic government of the heavens, and so these blessed ones that appear to him are still robed in the human form though glorified, yet from them he is to hear the most divine doctrine of celestial charity as essential to the bliss of Paradise and the beatitude of all God's Angels and saints.

Dante turns eagerly to the one that seems most desirous to speak with him, almost confused in his eagerness, for this is the first spirit of Paradise that he has seen, and his address becomes almost lyrical in his ardent impetuosity—

> O ben creato spirito, che a'rai
> Di vita eterna la dolcezza senti,
> Che non gustata non s'intende mai,—

And now no promise of fame as in the *Inferno*, no offer of prayers as in the *Purgatorio*, but merely a confident appeal to their celestial charity—

> Grazioso mi fia, se mi contenti
> Del nome tuo e della vostra sorte.
> *Par.* iii. 37.[1]

Neither have they on their part any need to ask him aught; the souls in Paradise all recognise and know who Dante is, whether they had any knowledge of him in the other world or not, for they read in God all things that

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[1] "O well-created spirit, who in the rays
Of life eternal dost the sweetness taste
Which being untasted ne'er is comprehended,
Grateful 'twill be to me if thou content me
Both with thy name and with your destiny."
LONGFELLOW.

concern them to know; but their divine beauty and glory, even in this lowest sphere, hide from the poet's recognition one who had been near to him on earth. For it is Piccarda Donati that reveals herself and explains the lot of the spirits in this sphere; and here, in Dante's answer as to why he had not recognised his wife's kinswoman, there is a most impressive contrast with many episodes in the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, where Dante meets with those whom he had known in the other life:—

> Ond'io a lei: Nei mirabili aspetti
> Vostri risplende non so che divino,
> Che vi trasmuta dai primi concetti.
> Però non fui a rimembrar festino.
>
> *Par.* iii. 58.[1]

Analogous words, with how terrible a difference, are those addressed to Ciacco in *Inferno* vi:—

> L'angoscia che tu hai
> Forse ti tira fuor della mia mente
> Sì che non par ch'io ti vedessi mai.[2]
>
> *Inf.* vi. 43.

But in many circles of Hell no disfigurement can hide the sinners from the poet's relentless gaze, although, in the realms of hope in Purgatory, so wasted is Piccarda's own brother Forese that it is by his voice alone that Dante's

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[1] Whence I to her: "In your miraculous aspects
There shines I know not what of the divine,
Which doth transform you from our first conceptions;
Therefore I was not swift in my remembrance"
LONGFELLOW.

[2] The anguish which thou hast
Perhaps doth draw thee out of my remembrance,
So that it seems not I have ever seen thee.
Ibid.

memory is awakened. Now all this has yielded to the exquisite conception of the transfiguring effect of perfect joy.

Piccarda's answer touching their lot, their joy at having the form of beatitude which is the pleasure of the Holy Spirit, and this apparently low place assigned to them because of "vows neglected and in some part void," induces Dante's question as to whether there mingles with their happiness no desire for a higher place. Full of joy comes Piccarda's reply, telling him of the perfection of their charity, their wills made absolutely one with the will of God, who has assigned different mansions or degrees of beatitude to all the blessed:—

Frate, la nostra volontà quieta
Virtù di carità, che fa volerne
Sol quel ch'avemo e d'altro non ci asseta.
Se disiassimo esser più superne,
Foran discordi gli nostri disiri
Dal voler di Colui che qui ne cerne,
Che vedrai non capere in questi giri,
S'essere in caritate è qui necesse,
E se la sua natura ben rimiri.
Anzi è formale ad esto beato esse
Tenersi dentro alla divina voglia,
Per ch'una fansi nostre voglie stesse,
Sì che, come noi sem di soglia in soglia
Per questo regno, a tutto il regno piace,
Come allo Re ch'a suo voler ne invoglia;
E la sua volontate è nostra pace:
Ella è quel mare, al qual tutto si move
Ciò ch'ella crea e che natura face.
Par. iii. 70.[1]

[1] "Brother, our will is quieted by virtue
Of charity, that makes us wish alone
For what we have, nor gives us thirst for more.
If to be more exalted we aspired,
Discordant would our aspirations be
Unto the will of Him who here secludes us

For the perfection of man's mind is measured by charity which unites him to God, his ultimate end, and the perfection of charity which is possible to any creature even in Paradise consists in the whole power of his affection being ever absolutely fixed on God.[1] Just as the substantial form is necessary for the being of anything and actuates formless matter, making the thing what it is, constituting its nature: so this perfection of charity, this absolute making one of the wills of the saints with the will of God, is *formal* or essential to beatitude. Love is the vital principle that informs and animates the bliss of Paradise as the soul of man does his body. And of this bliss of Paradise each soul has received more or less, but each is perfectly blessed, for each is perfectly full according to his capacity of this supreme grace of Knowledge and Love.

Briefly, but with ineffable pathos, Piccarda relates the story of her own life. Piccarda Donati, the sister of Corso and Forese Donati and a distant kinswoman of Dante's wife Gemma, became a nun of the order of St. Clare, and then was forced from her convent by her brother Corso and compelled to marry Rossellino della Tosa, after which

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Which thou shalt see finds no place in these circles
If being in charity is needful here
And if thou lookest well into its nature;
Nay, 'tis essential to this blest existence
To keep itself within the will divine,
Whereby our very wishes are made one;
So that, as we are station above station
Throughout this realm, to all the realm 'tis pleasing,
As to the King who makes His will our will.
And His will is our peace; this is the sea
To which is moving onward whatsoever
It doth create, and all that nature makes."

LONGFELLOW.

[1] St. Thomas, *Summa.* II—2 q. 184. a. 2. (Rickaby, *Aquinas Ethicus*).

she very soon fell ill and died. *Passò allo Sposo del Cielo, al quale spontaneamente s'era giurata,* says the author of the "Ottimo Commento", who had known Dante in exile and to whom we owe the story that Dante persuaded Piccarda's brother Forese to make his deathbed repentance. Piccarda is said to have been of great beauty, and some of the early commentators, followed by Benvenuto da Imola add a miraculous element to the story, concerning her prayer before the crucifix immediately after the marriage ceremony, calling upon Christ her Divine Spouse, and her consequent miraculous illness and death, ascending to God with her palm of virginity. Dante's words, however, certainly imply that she yielded to compulsion, and he leaves her subsequent life on earth in a mournful twilight: "God knows what afterward my life became"—

E Dio si sa qual poi mia vita fusi.

From Florence to the Empire is with Dante a natural transition. On the right of the Florentine lady is the great Empress Constance, the heiress of the last of the Norman rulers of the two Sicilies, who by her marriage with Henry VI became the mother of Frederick II. Piccarda implies that the story of Constance was similar to her own, forced from her convent to marry the son of Barbarossa, but never divested of the heart's veil:—

Non fu dal vel del cor giammai disciolta.

Giovanni Villani, in curious contrast to Dante's words, remarks that Constance was *monaca del corpo e non della mente,*

[1] This Forese Donati, the brother of Corso and the son of Simone, who appears in Purgatory expiating gluttony, is not to be confounded with another Forese Donati, the brother of Gemma and the son of Manetto, who is not mentioned in the Divine Comedy. Several commentators, including Rossetti in *Dante and His Circle,* have confused the two persons. Cf. I. del Lungo, *Dino Compagni.* Vol. ii. Appen. xvi.

and states that she fled to the convent merely for safety. Historical criticism rejects the whole legend. We shall perhaps do best to disregard both history and legend, and think of Constance as we find her in Dante's verse, in spite of the violence of men clinging fast to the ideal of her heart, and shining with all the light of the sphere of the Moon. The poet's idea, apparently, is that Constance is enjoying a higher degree of bliss than the other spirits that appear with her, for, whereas Piccarda yielded mainly through weakness and personal fear, Constance complied rather to secure the peace of Italy and from fear of the evils that might befall her country.

Piccarda's speech has closed with the Ave Maria, and the spirits have returned to the Empyrean. There remain certain questions to be solved, difficulties raised in Dante's mind by their appearance and words. These problems correspond perfectly to this lowest sphere of Paradise. They are no longer on a purely physical question, as was the preparatory discussion touching the spots on the Moon, nor yet on the profoundest mysteries of theology; but the one is to elucidate the state and position of all the souls in Paradise, even those that appear in the lowest spheres; and the other concerns the *Will*, for rectitude of will is absolutely requisite in order to attain to the last end of man, the vision which those spirits which Dante has just seen are actually enjoying. Just as it is the special function of the Angels to care for individuals as their guardians, so these matters, elucidated in the heaven which they move, concern the guidance and salvation of individual souls. Beatrice reads both Dante's questions—the first about the Divine Justice in lessening the degree of merit of these souls that appeared in the Moon, the second concerning the doctrine of Plato touching the return of souls to their stars, with which what he has seen seems to agree.

Beatrice answers the second question first as being more dangerous, *quella che più ha di felle.* Some such theories concerning the souls and the stars had been actually declared heretical by the Council of Constantinople in the sixth century, and it is curious to note that the famous picture in the National Gallery to which reference has already been made—the Assumption which, according to Vasari, was painted for Matteo Palmieri by Sandro Botticelli—at one time fell under ecclesiastical suspicion as tainted with some doctrine of this kind. Thus the question was possibly of some importance to a mediæval Florentine on the threshold of the Renaissance, and Beatrice simply explains what he has seen. These spirits are for all eternity in the same Heaven as the Seraphim and the most glorious of God's saints, even His own Virgin Mother; they enjoy the Beatific Vision in that last Heaven of all, for all eternity, and have only left their thrones for a time and descended into the inconstant Moon to give Dante this sensible sign of the lowest degree of bliss in the Empyrean. It is merely a sensible sign of an invisible mystery only to be apprehended by the intellect; a sensible sign whereby Dante may apprehend the doctrine of the distinction of the degrees or mansions of beatitude, —both the inequality of the merit by which they attained to their beatitude, and the inequality of perfection in that beatitude. All such inequality proceeds from inequality in the soul's capacity of the Divine Charity, and these momentary apparitions in the lower heavens are sensible signs of this intellectual mystery. Man ascends from things of sense to things apprehended by the intellect, through visible things to the knowledge of things invisible, for all man's knowledge comes first from the senses.[1]

[1] It will be remembered that scholastic philosophy regards the imagination as a material and sensuous faculty, as an internal sense, whereas the intellect is immaterial and spiritual.

Dante's other difficulty, as to how it could be just that these souls should lose merit through violence of others, is less dangerous, for the Divine Justice is incomprehensible to mortal eyes and faith is needed. As Dr. Scartazzini points out, the theories maintained by Dante in this heaven are intended to manifest the moral freedom of man, and to show that no external thing can interfere with the soul that is bent upon attaining the end for which God has destined it. Rectitude of the will is requisite for attainment of the bliss of Paradise, and nothing whatever can take away the freedom of that will. Dante follows closely the words of Aristotle concerning involuntary actions, and the teaching of St. Thomas and especially of Richard of St. Victor where the latter, in his treatise *De Statu Interioris Hominis*, treats of the dignity of Free Will. Aristotle defines a compulsory action as one whose origination is from without, the agent's will contributing nothing. Taken in this sense, the action of Piccarda and Constance was not absolutely compulsory; for, "as regards the proper act of the will itself no violence can be done to the will", that is the great point here:—

Chè volontà se non vuol non s'ammorza.

"For will unless it willeth is not quenched." It is only in the acts that are commanded by the will and exercised through some inferior power that the will can suffer violence, not as regards the proper act of the will itself.[1] Such is the freedom of the human will that God Himself will not do violence to it. "To put violence upon free will," writes Richard of St. Victor, "neither fits the Creator nor is in the power of the creature. If all hell, all the world, even all the hosts of heaven were to come together and combine

[1] *Summa* I—2ª. q. 6. a. 4.

in this one thing, they could not force a single consent from free will in anything not willed."[1] But these nuns did not keep their wills firm, as St. Lawrence on his fiery bed and the Roman hero before Porsenna. Through fear their wills yielded, for they did not return to their cloisters on the first cessation of force; and actions done through fear of a greater evil are rather voluntary than involuntary. There is a distinction between will hypothetic, which does not consent to an evil, and the actual will, which chooses what under the circumstances seems the lesser evil. The hypothetic will of these women kept firm to their vow, but their respective or actual wills yielded to violence. Thus, according to Beatrice, Piccarda and Constance fell voluntarily from the state of perfection to which they were called, for "the idea of voluntariness is sufficiently fulfilled in that which is voluntary for the sake of something else—as a means though not as an end",[2]—that is, to escape a worse evil feared.

It is with a profound sentence upon the satisfaction of the human intellect that Dante passes on to the final point in the discussion. Human intellect cannot be satisfied until it penetrates to Universal Truth: it can penetrate so far, and questions arise as stepping stones to lead up to it:—

Io veggio ben che giammai non si sazia
Nostro intelletto, se il Ver non lo illustra,
Di fuor dal qual nessun vero si spazia.
Posasi in esso, come fera in lustra,
Tosto che giunto l'ha: e giugner puollo;
Se non, ciascun disio sarebbe frustra.

---

[1] There is an odd coincidence of expression in the old mystic's *totus infernus, totus mundus, totus denique militiæ cælestis exercitus* with Hamlet's—

O all you host of heaven! O earth! what else?
And shall I couple hell?

[2] *Summa* I—2 q. 6. a. 6. ad 1.

Nasce per quello, a guisa di rampollo,
Appiè del vero il dubbio: ed è natura,
Ch'al sommo pinge noi di collo in collo.
Par. iv. 124.[1]

Just as the object of the will is the Universal Good which is found in God alone, so the object of the intellect is the Universal Truth. The intellect of the rational creature has a natural desire to know the truth, and, if it cannot penetrate to the First Cause of things, this desire which comes from nature would be in vain. Thus from the known we pass to the unknown, from lower to higher truths, until we reach supreme Truth. It is again the mighty thought expressed in Marlowe's mighty line—

Still climbing after knowledge infinite.

Dante would, therefore, have a difficulty explained concerning the making of satisfaction for broken vows, in order to set forth still more clearly that glorious liberty of the will with which man becomes *obnoxius Justitiæ præmianti*, and can merit eternal life. Liberty of the will is then the true theme of the closing teaching of this first Heaven which opens Canto v.; the actual question of satisfaction for broken vows is of merely secondary importance. It is indeed to this liberty of the will that the sanctity of a vow is due:—

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[1] Well I perceive that never sated is
Our intellect unless the Truth illume it,
Beyond which nothing true expands itself.
It rests therein, as wild beast in his lair,
When it attains it; and it can attain it;
If not, then each desire would frustrate be.
Therefore springs up, in fashion of a shoot,
Doubt at the foot of truth; and this is nature
Which to the top from height to height impels us.
LONGFELLOW.

Lo maggior don, che Dio per sua larghezza
Fêsse creando, ed alla sua bontate
Più conformato, e quel ch'ei più apprezza,
Fu della volontà la libertate,
Di che le creature intelligenti,
E tutte e sole furo e son dotate.[1]
Par. v. 19.

In a vow that God accepts, by its own act this most sublime of God's gifts to man is offered as victim. If such is the sanctity of a vow, how can the Church's dispensations be explained? Dante shows great severity on this point: the essence of the vow contains two elements, the matter of the vow and the sacrifice of the will: the latter cannot ever be cancelled, the former can be commuted by the authority of the Church. St. Thomas was far more lenient and held, not only that the matter could be commuted, but that the Church has power even to dispense from the actual vow. Nor, in Dante's opinion, can vows always be even commuted. The change of matter must, according to him, be to something of greater value, hence there are some vows for which compensation is impossible, such as a solemn vow of perpetual chastity. Both Benvenuto and the *Ottimo* are somewhat concerned at the severity of Dante's doctrine,

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[1] The greatest gift that in His largess God
Creating made, and unto His own goodness
Nearest conformed, and that which He doth prize
Most highly, is the freedom of the will,
Wherewith the creatures of intelligence
Both all and only were and are endowed.
LONGFELLOW.

Cf. Richard of St. Victor, *De Statu Interioris Hominis:* "Nothing in man is more sublime, nothing more worthy than Free Will. In it man was created to the image of God. Liberty of the will is impressed with the image of changeless Eternity and the likeness of the Divine Majesty."

Benvenuto noting that Constance failed in her vow for the good of the kingdom of Sicily, and both testify their belief that the Pope has full power in the matter. Such indeed would seem Dante's final conclusion also, for Beatrice, after a solemn warning against vows of indifferent or of unlawful matter (the latter illustrated as usual by one example from the Scriptures and one from classical antiquity), thus concludes her discourse on matters connected with freedom of the will:—

Siate, Cristiani, a muovervi più gravi,
Non siate come penna ad ogni vento,
E non crediate ch'ogni acqua vi lavi.
Avete il vecchio e il nuovo testamento,
E il pastor della Chiesa che vi guida:
Questo vi basti a vostro salvamento.
Par. v. 73.[1]

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[1] Christians, be more serious in your movements;
Be ye not like a feather at each wind,
And think not every water washes you.
Ye have the Old and the New Testament,
And the pastor of the Church who guideth you;
Let this suffice you unto your salvation.
LONGFELLOW.

Dante's view of the solemn vow of perpetual chastity agrees with St. Thomas (*Summa* II—2 q. 88. a. 11). Such vows cannot even be commuted for the common good and the peace of nations, for perils of human things are not to be met by converting things divine to human use.

II. THE HEAVEN OF MERCURY.

"Dico ergo quod si Romanum Imperium de Jure non fuit, Christus nascendo persuasit injustum. Et si Romanum Imperium de Jure non fuit, peccatum Adae in Christo non fuit punitum". DANTE, *De Monarchia.*

SWIFTLY as an arrow that strikes its mark while the cord still vibrates, Dante and Beatrice have ascended into this second Heaven. Besides the usual sign of ascent to a higher sphere, the increased loveliness of Beatrice, there is manifested in these spirits of Mercury a corresponding higher grade of glory and higher perfection of charity, when compared with those in the Moon. Here, as in the Moon and nowhere else in the lower spheres of Paradise, the actual figures of these blessed souls are at first seen in the midst of their radiance; but, as showing a higher grade of beatitude, the figure becomes concealed in the splendour of its light as its joy is increased. So, too, the perfection of their charity is greater. The spirits in the sphere of the Moon had appeared eager to speak, yet had waited for Dante's question; here, in the sphere of Mercury, one of them at once addresses Dante in his ardour of charity, to bid him at his own pleasure learn from them all that he desires to know, and his address resembles Dante's own appeal to Piccarda (*O bene nato*), so much have the saints of Paradise already made the poet one of themselves. *Ecco chi crescerà*

li nostri amori, is their greeting to Dante and Beatrice: "Lo, one who will increase our loves."

With Piccarda we had breathed the air of the convent. Her Canto was full of the purest poetry of the mediæval cloister, impregnated with the mystical aroma of the fire that burned from Assisi and the Umbrian mountains. Now we are brought back to another aspect of mediæval life—the deadly feuds of Guelphs and Ghibellines, and that misdirected enthusiasm for the Empire. In marked contrast to the pathetic conventual story of Piccarda, the Emperor Justinian recites the proud history of Rome, the triumphant flight of the Roman Eagle over the conquered world. As the legislator of Dante's ideal universal Monarchy, he proclaims its divinely established right to universal sway, touching first upon the times that passed between Constantine's reign and his own, and upon his own work for Italy and the Empire. With Æneas the Eagle had followed the course of the Heavens from East to West, until Constantine had turned her back from Italy to the East: "Against the course of Heaven and Doom" (as Shelley sang of the Eagle of Freedom); and there the imperial bird had remained until the reconquest of Italy by the generals of Justinian. Justinian in Dante's eyes recovered for the Eagle the garden of the Empire, and mended the bridle of the noble steed whose saddle was now empty (*Purgatorio* vi. 88—90). Converted from heresy by Pope Agapetus, he accomplished his divinely inspired work as law-giver, whilst his general Belesarius, aided likewise by the right hand of Heaven, upheld the glory of the imperial arms against the Goths and Vandals.

The lines that follow Justinian's account of his own career inculcate the great doctrine that Dante has in view: neither Guelphs nor Ghibellines, neither the foes nor the friends of the imperial cause, in their sordid and petty party poli-

tics have realised the sanctity of the sacred emblem of the Empire:—

> Vedi quanta virtù l'ha fatto degno
> Di riverenza.

"See what great virtue has made it worthy of reverence!" Dante has treated in three places of this, for him, all important subject, that truth "among other truths ill understood yet profitable, at once the most profitable and most obscure, the knowledge touching Temporal Monarchy or the Empire": in the special treatise the *De Monarchia*, in Book IV of the *Convito*, and here and elsewhere in the Divine Comedy. While the *Paradiso* is certainly the work of the last years of the poet's life, it is possible that the *De Monarchia* was written in exile, shortly before the attempt of Henry VII to restore the imperial power. The fourth Book of the *Convito* was, possibly, written at two different epochs; the earlier part, including the remarks upon the Empire, being written before Dante's exile, and the rest of the book, with its bitter reference to Florence, later on when plundered and banished. Those chapters in the *Convito* which treat of the Monarchy read like a first sketch for the *De Monarchia*, containing the first two books of the latter in germ, but written in a calmer spirit; Dante does not yet openly attack the excessive claims of the Papacy and the prelates, nor lash out against their corruption.[1] It would seem as though he were not yet embittered by unjust exile. It was, perhaps, while engaged upon this part of the *Convito* that his views underwent the change and conversion which he describes at the beginning of Book II of the *De Monarchia*.

In the *De Monarchia*, Dante discusses three questions concerning the Empire. Is the Empire necessary for the

[1] Francesco Selmi, *Il Convito sua cronologia, etc.*, Torino 1865.

welfare of the world? Did the Roman people rightfully and lawfully obtain this universal sway? Does the authority of the Empire come directly from God or only through the Pope? And in the *De Monarchia* he answers these three questions from the point of view of a philosopher and Ghibelline politician; in the *Convito* he had answered the first and second in a slighter, but perhaps more poetical manner; here, in Canto vi. of the *Paradiso*, although indirectly answering the first (as indeed he does throughout the poem), he more especially deals with the second question, but now more as a poet than as a practical politician. He leaves the third question to be answered, allegorically but most emphatically, in the vision of the Eagle in the sphere of Jupiter, and now contents himself mainly with showing that the Roman Empire has by Divine Providence the universal rule of the world. "That people who conquered when all were striving hard for the empire of the world, conquered by the will of God." (*De Mon.* II. 9).

To show this, Justinian recites the mighty deeds of the Roman Eagle, from Æneas to Cæsar and his successors. The great deeds in war of Roman heroes are rehearsed as in the *Convito* and the *De Monarchia*. The Roman People was ordained by God for Empire, it was by His judgment that they prevailed; and Cæsar won the prize of monarchy where the rulers of the East and Alexander of Macedon himself had failed. Many of these victories which Justinian triumphantly quotes are held by Dante to have been special appeals of the Romans to God, and by the decision of combat they gained the crown of the world. Thus when at last, under Augustus and his universal sway, the Eagle had set the world at peace, it was not force but Divine Providence that had established this sway of the Roman People and made them paramount throughout the earth. As Dante puts it in the *Convito*:—

"La forza dunque non fu cagione movente, ma fu cagione strumentale, siccome sono i colpi del martello cagione del coltello, e l'anima del fabbro è cagione efficiente e movente; e così non forza ma ragione ancora divina è stata principio del romano imperio."[1]

From a famous passage at the opening of Book II of the *De Monarchia*, we learn that it was Dante's conviction of this truth which induced his political conversion. When once convinced that not arms and violence but Divine Providence had wrought this thing, he put aside the vain imaginations of Guelphism in which he had been reared, and cried on behalf of the glorious Roman People and for Cæsar: "Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth stand up and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed"—His one only Roman Emperor.

Up to a certain point in the *De Monarchia* Dante proves his theories by arguments which mostly rest on principles of reason, and then makes his point clear by arguments based upon principles of Christian Faith. These latter arguments are two in number. If the Roman Empire did not exist by right, Christ in being born presupposed and sanctioned an unjust thing, in that He willed to be born under the edict of Cæsar Augustus; and if the Roman Empire did not exist by right, the sin of Adam was not punished in Christ, for unless Tiberius Cæsar had rightfully jurisdiction

[1] *Convito* iv. 4. "Force was not the active cause but was the instrumental cause; as the blows of the hammer are the instrumental cause of the knife, and the soul of the smith is the efficient and active cause; and thus not force but law, and that Divine, was the beginning of the Roman Empire." (MISS K. HILLARD'S translation). For *non forza ma ragione ancora divina*, there is an alternative reading *non forza ma cagione ancora divina:* not force but a divine cause.

over all mankind, the atonement offered by Christ for all mankind would not have been valid. So, here too, Justinian now brings forward more sacred episodes in its history to show the sanctity of the Empire. All its past and future, all the mighty deeds that the Eagle had done or was to do for the earth beneath its sway, were eclipsed by the glory under Tiberius of having been the instrument of the Atonement, when Christ Himself owned its jurisdiction. Then, under Titus, it took vengeance for the death of Christ; and then protected the Church which He had left, when beneath its wings Charlemagne brought succour to the Papacy against the assaults of the Lombards.

There is a significant difference in the way Dante concludes his arguments on the Empire in these three works. In the *Convito* there is no fierce attack upon the opponents of his view, but merely a poetical conclusion as to the sacred character of Rome:—

"E certo sono di ferma opinione, che le pietre che nelle mura sue stanno siano degne di reverenzia; e'l suolo dov'ella siede sia degno oltre quello che per gli uomini è predicato e provato."[1]

In the *De Monarchia* it is the party politician, the stern and injured convert to Ghibelline principles, that concludes the second Book (which had commenced with a defence of his own conversion) with a fierce rebuke to the Guelphs alone:—

"Let them cease then to insult the Roman Empire who pretend that they are the sons of the Church; when they

[1] *Convito* iv. 5. "The stones which form her walls are worthy of reverence; and the ground upon which she stands is worthy beyond all that has been preached and proved by men."

Miss K. Hillard's translation.

see that Christ, the bridegroom of the Church, sanctioned the Roman Empire at the beginning and at the end of His warfare upon earth."[1]

But, when the *Paradiso* was written, Dante had formed a party by himself, and, from his height of moderation and impartiality, Guelphs and Ghibellines alike are regarded with contemptuous indignation, both condemned equally as foes to the Empire and causers of all the woes of Italy:—

Omai puoi giudicar di quei cotali
Ch'io accusai di sopra e de' lor falli,
Che son cagion di tutti i vostri mali.
L'uno al pubblico segno i gigli gialli
Oppone, e l'altro appropria quello a parte;
Sì ch'è forte a veder qual più si falli.
Par. vi. 97.[2]

The spirits that appear with Justinian in this sphere of Mercury are they who did great deeds, but who were impelled more by ambition and vain glory than by the love of God:—

Perchè onore e fama gli succeda.

Dante's conception here is a striking contrast to that passionate desire for Fame which was to become all in all to Italians of the Renaissance. With him love of Fame makes "the rays of true love less vividly mount upwards"—

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[1] Church's translation.

[2] Now hast thou power to judge of such as those
Whom I accused above and of their crimes,
Which are the cause of all your miseries.
To the public standard one the yellow lilies
Opposes, the other claims it for a party,
So that 'tis hard to see which sins the most.
LONGFELLOW.

i raggi
Del vero amore in su poggian men vivi.

St. Thomas declares that "he is not truly virtuous who does the works of virtue for the sake of human glory," and that the glory sought is vain if the seeking of it be not directed to the honour of God and the salvation of his neighbour. This imperfection of vain glory tempered the rays of love, and so, since all inequality of merit is due to inequality of charity, these souls have the next lowest mansion of beatitude to that of the inconstant spirits of the Moon: inequality of disposition and inequality of merit being the twofold principle from which the distinction of the mansions or degrees of beatitude is derived. And they themselves desire no more than they have, but rejoice in this proportion between merit and reward. As diverse voices make harmony on earth, so diverse grades of glory render harmony in Heaven.

Among these active spirits Justinian points out the light of Romeo of Villanova:—

Romeo, di cui
Fu l'opra bella e grande mal gradita.

"whose fair and great work was ill rewarded." Romeo, the faithful minister of Raymond Berlinghieri of Provence, made each of the Count's daughters a queen, and then—

Through sin of cursed slander's tongue and tooth

as Boccaccio in his famous sonnet sings of Dante himself (*colpa di lingue scellerate e ladre*), was treated with black ingratitude, and so departed poor as he came. In the story of Romeo, his work for Raymond Berlinghieri, the envy of the Provençals and their punishment, the Count's ingratitude and Romeo's voluntary exile and poverty, it is scarcely fanciful to read an account of Dante's own career.

The *opra bella e grande* which was *mal gradita* can well refer to the patriotic efforts of Dante as a Florentine statesman, especially in his priorate, to repress the factions and resist Papal interference; the punishment of the envious Provençals, when the heavy yoke of the house of Anjou fell upon them, may stand for the misfortunes of the Florentines after the coming of Charles of Valois; and the account demanded of Romeo's administration perhaps corresponds to the accusations of corrupt practices during the priorate which his enemies launched against Dante. The concluding lines of Canto vi., resembling so closely what Dante says elsewhere in the *Paradiso* and in the *Convito* of his own poverty and wanderings in exile, seem certainly referable to the poet himself:—

> Indi partissi povero e vetusto;
> E se il mondo sapesse il cuor ch'egli ebbe
> Mendicando sua vita a frusto a frusto,
> Assai lo loda e più lo loderebbe.[1]
> *Par.* vi. 139.

From the Roman Eagle, when Henry of Luxemburg was its bearer, Dante had once looked for the cure of the wounds of Italy and his own restoration to Florence, and it is not unfitting that he should end his history of its mighty deeds and his rebuke of the party conflicts which were ruining

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[1] Then he departed poor and stricken in years,
And if the world could know the heart he had,
In begging bit by bit his livelihood,
Though much it laud him it would laud him more.
LONGFELLOW.

The *vetusto* might well be applied to Dante at the time of writing the *Paradiso;* Giovanni del Virgilio in the Eclogues addresses him as *senex.* Cf. *Paradiso* xvii. and *Convito* I. 3. where the poet describes himself as *peregrino, quasi mendicando,* which resembles the *Romeo persona umile e peregrina.*

his country with this unobtrusive and dignified reference to his own unmerited exile and sufferings.

Just as in the first appearance and in the bearing of these spirits of Mercury there was a designed contrast with those of the Moon, so it is manifest in their departure, as Justinian and his companions return to the Empyrean. The gentle Ave Maria of those inconstant nuns is replaced by the hymn of praise to the God of Hosts of these ambitious spirits of the active life; and instead of that gradual disappearance of the former, as something heavy through deep water still followed by the poet's gaze as long as possible, these active spirits suddenly vanish as swift flashes of light.

The difficulties that Justinian's words have left in Dante's mind, and which Beatrice proceeds to solve, are of a higher nature and deal with profounder themes than those in the first Heaven, even as the Archangels have a profounder comprehension of divine mysteries than the Angels. How could just vengeance be justly avenged, just punishment justly punished by the same judge that had originally inflicted it, and both be the supreme glory of the Roman Eagle? Adam by his fall condemned himself and all his offspring, and human nature was alienated from God until, at the Incarnation, the Word of God by the work of the Eternal Love was united to human nature in Christ. The human nature united to its Maker in Christ was pure from sin and good through infused virtues, as when it was first created in Adam; but nevertheless of itself, inasmuch as it was human nature, it was still banished forth from Paradise. The satisfaction offered by Christ was of infinite value, as was necessary because of the greatness of the offence offered by man to God by sin; and was most just with regard to the human nature which He had assumed, though with regard to the infinite dignity of the Divine

Person the Crucifixion was the greatest crime ever committed. The Earth trembled at the deicide, but the Heavens opened at the redemption. Thus is solved the difficulty how *Giusta vendetta poscia vengiata fu da giusta corte*, the *giusta corte* being, I think, not intended for the Divine Justice, but the imperial jurisdiction. This expression, and that of *La pena che la croce porse*, correspond with Dante's own words in the *De Monarchia* where he propounds that somewhat amazing doctrine that, if the Roman Empire did not exist by right, the sin of Adam was not punished in Christ. It is intended to show that the Crucifixion was a penalty inflicted by the sentence of a regular judge who had lawfully jurisdiction over the whole world, since all mankind was punished in the flesh of Christ. "And if the Roman Empire had not existed by right, Tiberius Cæsar, whose vicar was Pontius Pilate, would not have had jurisdiction over all mankind."

A new question arises. Why did God choose this mode for our redemption rather than any other? Beatrice explains that the human soul, created immediately by the Divine Goodness, has three lofty prerogatives—immortality, freedom of the will, and likeness to God. By sin it sinks to servitude and becomes unlike to God: a void is left in the moral order, which must be filled up with just suffering to restore the soul to its primal dignity:—

Contra mal dilettar con giuste pene.

Now original justice was lost together with the Earthly Paradise. Two ways were open for man's redemption and restoration to this lost dignity: either God must have pardoned, or man of himself made satisfaction. The latter course was an impossibility, for the enormity of the offence offered by a mere creature's disobedience to God requires a satisfaction of infinite value and man's satisfaction is but finite. There-

fore it remained for God to restore man by the way of mercy or of justice, or by both. God chose to proceed by both ways, not simply pardoning man, but giving Himself to man that the Divine Justice might be satisfied by the infinite humiliation of the Word Divine; and this redemption of man by the Incarnation was the supremest work at once of Divine Justice and of Divine Mercy:—

La divina bontà, che il mondo imprenta,
Di proceder per tutte le sue vie
A rilevarvi suso fu contenta;
Nè tra l'ultima notte e il primo die
Sì alto e sì magnifico processo,
O per l'una o per l'altra fu o fie.
Chè più largo fu Dio a dar sè stesso
A far l'uom sufficiente a rilevarsi,
Che s'egli avesse sol da sè dimesso;
E tutti gli altri modi erano scarsi
Alla giustizia, se il Figliuol di Dio
Non fosse umiliato ad incarnarsi.

Par. vii. 109.[1]

One more difficulty remains to be cleared away. Why are some things that God has created subject to corruption? Beatrice had said:

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[1] Goodness Divine, that doth imprint the world,
Has been contented to proceed by each
And all its ways to lift you up again;
Nor 'twixt the first day and the final night
Such high and such magnificent proceeding
By one or by the other was or shall be;
For God more bounteous was Himself to give
To make man able to uplift himself,
Than if He only of Himself had pardoned;
And all the other modes were insufficient
For justice, were it not the Son of God
Himself had humbled to become incarnate.

LONGFELLOW.

Ciò che da lei senza mezzo distilla
Non ha poi fine, perchè non si move
La sua imprenta, quand'ella sigilla.
Par. vii. 67.[1]

And yet created things are seen to decay and pass away; the elements and their mixtures, that is, all corporeal bodies, come to corruption and last but little time. The solution of the puzzle lies in the distinction between things created immediately by God and those produced by second causes. The immediate imprint of God's hand can never be cancelled; what His finger has touched and quickened must needs be immortal and incorruptible. The Angels and the heavens were created immediately by God, and therefore must be in their nature perfect, everlasting, not subject to decay. But all corporeal substances are composed of two principles, the material principle and the substantial form. The substantial forms give being to matter which cannot be known of itself, since it is the same in all bodies and is determined only by the form:—

Ma gli elementi che tu hai nomati
E quelle cose che di lor si fanno,
Da creata virtù sono informati.
Creata fu la materia ch'egli hanno,
Creata fu la virtù informante
In queste stelle, che intorno a lor vanno.
Ibid. 133.[2]

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[1] Whate'er from this [Divine Goodness] immediately distils
Has afterwards no end, for ne'er removed
Is its impression when it sets its seal.
LONGFELLOW.

[2] But all the elements which thou hast named,
And all those things which out of them are made,
By a created virtue are informed.
Created was the matter which they have;
Created was the informing influence
Within these stars that round about them go.
Ibid.

This matter, *materia prima*, which is the same in all bodies, was created immediately by God; it is not itself subject to corruption; it remains as a substratum, which receives successively different forms but still itself remains beneath them all. As Spenser writes of Adonis:—

> All be he subject to mortalitie,
> Yet is eterne in mutabilitie,
> And by succession made perpetuall,
> Transformed oft, and chaunged diverslie;
> For him the Father of all formes they call:
> Therfore needs mote he live, that living gives to all.

But upon this matter the substantial forms are imprinted, not immediately by God, but by the intervention of secondary causes, by "informing virtue" which He has created in the stars. Dante showed in the second Canto how these stars are like hammers in the hands of Angels, to stamp these forms or ideas upon what is beneath their sway. Thus, although their matter was immediately created by God, yet all these substances are produced by secondary causes and are therefore subject to corruption. So too are the vital principles of brutes and plants, what scholastic philosophers call *sensitive* and *vegetative* souls, produced by secondary causes, and perish with the animal or plant which they animate. But the human soul is created immediately by God, without the intervention of secondary causes; it is subsistent, immaterial and immortal, and is restless until it rests in Him:—

> Ma vostra vita senza mezzo spira
> La somma Beninanza, e la innamora
> Di sè, sì che poi sempre la disira.
> *Par.* vii. 142.[1]

[1] But the Supreme Goodness immediately breathes your own life and enamours it so with Itself that it evermore desires It.

Thence Beatrice draws finally a somewhat unscientific argument concerning the resurrection of the body. This innate tendency to God points to immortality and future resurrection; as also the fact that God in making Adam and Eve created not only their souls, but also their bodies immediately, indicates the immortality of the body likewise. However unscientific the argument, for we could hardly expect to find Dante a prophet of Evolution, still that most divine painting of Michael Angelo's, in which the first man seems verily starting into life at the vivifying touch of his Creator, may perhaps make us realise more the grand mediæval thought of the Divine Goodness in Dante's line—

Non si move
La sua imprenta quand'ella sigilla.

III. THE HEAVEN OF VENUS.

"Erit ergo illius civitatis et una in omnibus, et inseparabilis in singulis voluntas libera, ab omni malo liberata, et impleta omni bono, fruens indeficienter æternorum jucunditate gaudiorum, oblita culparum, oblita pœnarum; nec tamen ideo suæ liberationis oblita, ut liberatori suo non sit grata."

ST. AUGUSTINE, *De Civitate Dei.*

THE increased loveliness of Beatrice makes Dante aware of their ascent to the sphere of the "star" of Venus. Not only has the beauty of Beatrice increased, but, when the spirits of this heaven appear to him, there is obviously a distinct gradation in their glory and their charity as compared with the souls in the heaven of Mercury; they excel them in these respects just as those active spirits had surpassed the spirits of the Moon. Here their figures are at once completely concealed in dazzling light, although, since we are not beyond the earth's shadow, there is perhaps a vestige of human lineaments indicated in the words of the saint (of Dante's own canonisation) that addresses Dante, though less marked than in the second sphere; and their motion is far swifter in their greater ardour to satisfy the poet, than that expressed by the quaint image of fishes in a fish pond crowding to be fed, with which Dante had described the souls in Mercury. Now they are seen as brilliant lights moving circle-wise, hidden in the rays of their own joy; their approach is more rapid than the swiftest winds; and

the *Ecco chi crescerà li nostri amori* of those ambitious spirits is drowned in the *Hosanna* of the souls of the lovers. These are they who in life yielded overmuch and in a wrong way to the influence of Venus, but who purified their love by timely penance, and are now absorbed in the vision and love of God.

Carlo Martello, the eldest son of Charles II of Apulia, comes forward as the representative of his companions to greet Dante, quoting to him the first line of his own great ode—

Voi che intendendo il terzo ciel movete:

that splendid first Canzone of the *Convito*, in which Dante invoked the angelic order who rule the sphere of Venus, and told how love for Philosophy struggled in his heart with love for his dead lady Beatrice. Carlo Martello is the only member of the house of Anjou that found favour in Dante's sight. The poet's words imply that at one time he had set great hopes upon him, and when, after describing the regions over which he should have reigned, Southern Provence and Apulia, Hungary, of which he was already titular king, and Sicily, the young king speaks of the line of rulers he might have founded—

Nati per me di Carlo e di Ridolfo:

we can vaguely surmise that such kings, sprung from the Guelph blood of the stern Charles of Anjou and the Ghibelline race of the noble Emperor Rudolph, both of whom are among the great spirits of the Valley of the Princes in the *Purgatorio*, might in Dante's expectation have healed the feuds of Guelphs and Ghibellines through the loves of Carlo and Clemenza. There may, too, have been some personal friendship between Dante and him to explain the high part he plays in Paradise:—

Assai m'amasti ed avesti bene onde:[1]

though it has been argued that Dante may only be generally alluding to the young king's friendship for the Florentines. His hopes were cut short by Charles' death in 1295. This spirit illustrates the analogy between the saints of the sphere and the celestial Principalities who move it, by his denunciation of the misgovernment of his house and the avarice of his brother Robert (whose vicar, Ranieri di Zaccaria of Orvieto, in 1315 renewed the sentence of death against Dante, and included his two sons in the decree), and by solving for Dante the difficulties connected with the constitution of society.

Carlo Martello had said that his avaricious brother was sprung from a generous father, for liberality is one of the virtues that Dante sometimes allows to the "cripple of Jerusalem". The poet in return somewhat ceremoniously demands an explanation, *Come uscir può di dolce seme amaro*—"How from sweet seed can bitter issue forth?" A similar question is slightly touched upon in Plato's dialogue *Protagoras*: How does it happen that virtuous fathers frequently have unworthy sons? Dante himself had written in the *Purgatorio*:—

> Rade volte risurge per li rami
> L'umana probitate: e questo vuole
> Quei che la dà, perchè da Lui si chiami.
>
> *Purg.* vii. 121.[2]

But here, in this heaven of the celestial Principalities, the question is more closely investigated with special refer-

[1] "Much didst thou love me and thou hadst good reason."

[2] Not oftentimes upriseth through the branches
The probity of man; and this He wills
Who gives it, so that we may ask of Him.
LONGFELLOW.

ence to the constitution of society and the government of states. First a fundamental truth is made clear. The heavenly bodies are the instruments of Divine Providence for the order and government of the world; for this end God has communicated to them the virtues by which they influence the lower bodies. Now, by means of this virtue of the heavens, God not only ordains things in their being, but in that being which is best for them:—

> E non pur le nature provvedute
> Son nella Mente ch'è da sè perfetta,
> Ma esse insieme con la lor salute.
> *Par.* viii. 100.[1]

To this end all celestial influences are directed as an arrow to its mark; and they do not work in vain, or the Divine Intelligence would not be perfect. Whatever the stars cause is not by chance, but tends to the end ordained by God.

God ordained man not to stand alone, but in society as the part of a state. "Every man," says St. Thomas, "needs first of all the divine assistance, and secondly also human assistance, for man is naturally a social animal, not being self-sufficient for the purposes of life."

> Ond'egli ancora: Or di', sarebbe il peggio
> Per l'uomo in terra se non fosse cive?
> Sì, rispos'io, e qui ragion non chieggio.
> E può egli esser, se giù non si vive
> Diversamente per diversi officî?
> No, se il maestro vostro ben vi scrive.
> *Ibid.* 115.[2]

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[1] And not alone the natures are foreseen
Within the mind that in itself is perfect,
But they together with their preservation.
LONGFELLOW.

[2] Whence he again: 'Now say would it be worse
For men on earth were they not citizens?'
'Yes,' I replied; 'and here I ask no reason.'

The *maestro*, Aristotle, writes thus: "The state is a creation of nature, and man is by nature a political animal. And he who by nature and not by mere accident is without a state, is either above humanity or below it."[1] Nature makes nothing in vain. Man is the only animal to whom she has given power of speech and the sense of right and wrong. Therefore man was clearly intended by nature to be a political animal: "The state is a creation of nature and prior to the individual, for the individual, when isolated, is not self-sufficing and therefore he is like a part in relation to the whole." Aristotle further defines a state as a body of citizens sufficing for the purposes of life. In order that a state should be self-sufficing, there must be distributions of functions and of duties. Carlo Martello therefore follows with his conclusion and answer to Dante's question. Division of professions and offices is necessary, and for these different dispositions are requisite in men. Therefore one is born with qualities for a legislator as Solon, another a leader of armies as Xerxes, another called to the priesthood, another with the disposition of a craftsman. The heavenly bodies that circle round us impress their influence upon men, to stamp them with these qualities without regard to the origin of the individual. Nature in its course would always make the offspring similar to the parents, but Divine Providence, for the sake of the constitution of human society, prevents this uniformity by means of the influence of the heavens. The world should strive to correspond with nature, and so carry out the designs of Divine Providence, by not forcing individuals into lines of

'And can they be so, if below they live not
Diversely unto offices diverse?
No, if your master writeth well for you.'
LONGFELLOW.

[1] Aristotle, *Politics*. JOWETT'S translation.

life for which they are not suited, nor make a monk of one born a soldier, and king of a man fit only to preach. With this pleasant thrust at his brother Robert, Charles closes his discourse, and Dante opens the next Canto (Canto ix.) with a more bitter reference to the future hero of Petrarch, where, addressing the fair Clemenza, daughter of Carlo Martello, he utters a mysterious prophecy of future vengeance to fall upon those who defrauded his children of their heritage. Charles II died in 1308 and named Robert as his heir, instead of Carobert, the son of Carlo Martello. King Robert is clearly not in Dante's good books; the poet still smarts under the cruel decree of his vicar.

Cunizza da Romano, the Palma of Robert Browning's *Sordello*, next reveals herself to Dante. There is a fascinating mystery about Cunizza; the sister of that monster, the devil-begotten Ezzelino, must surely have been a unique being. After her extraordinary career of intrigue and "amazing marriages", in which she seems to have been as often sinned against as sinning, Cunizza, upon the tragical annihilation of her family, took refuge with her mother's house in Tuscany. It was in the house of Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti, the father of Dante's Guido, that Cunizza made her deed granting liberty to the serfs (which, however, they seem to have already taken on the fall of her brothers). Dante probably derived his view of her character from the Cavalcanti; he had possibly even seen her whilst leading a life of penance and devotion, and has here enshrined a memory of his childhood, as in Carlo Martello he records a bright passage of his early manhood. She is no doubt in Paradise partly on the principle of charity covering a multitude of sins, as she is said to have relieved the victims of the cruelty of her brother, that torch of destruction, whom Dante had seen in Hell buried up to the eyebrows in boiling blood:—

D'una radice nacqui ed io ed ella;
Cunizza fui chiamata, e qui refulgo
Perchè mi vinse il lume d'esta stella.
Ma lietamente a me medesma indulgo
La cagion di mia sorte, e non mi noia,
Che parria forse forte al vostro vulgo.
Par. ix. 31.[1]

The *Ottimo* quotes these lines as an illustration of the doctrine that Dante has just discussed with Carlo Martello concerning the different dispositions of children from the same stock, the brother following the influence of Mars and the sister that of Venus. A true modern child of Venus, so Benvenuto cynically calls her, but Dante has enthroned her for all time as the perfect type of a Penitent. Cunizza has obtained a lower mansion of beatitude in consequence of her frailty; but this is not a cause of grief, for she rejoices in the divine predestination. She speaks of the fame that waits upon excellent deeds, and utters prophecies of ills and bloodshed to fall upon the Marca Trevigiana,—the usual tales of petty warfare and treachery, numbers still flowing to us

For old unhappy far-off things
And battles long ago.

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[1] Out of one root was born both I and it;
Cunizza was I called, and here I shine
Because the splendour of this star o'ercame me.
But gladly to myself the cause I pardon
Of my allotment, and it does not grieve me;
Which would perhaps seem strong unto your vulgar.
LONGFELLOW.

This method of illustrating the text "One shall be taken and one shall be left" by placing one member of a family among the saved, and another closely related among the lost, is characteristic of Dante. Here we have brother and sister, elsewhere father and son, as in the cases of Frederick and Manfredi, and the two Counts of Montefeltro, Guido and Buonconte.

One of these, a bloody deed of treason and party malice of the Bishop of Feltro, is a fine example of Dante's tragic power and terrible irony.

It is noteworthy that both Carlo Martello and Cunizza incidentally correct a mistake that Dante had made in the *Convito* touching the angelic order which move this third Heaven, where he supposed that they are the Thrones. Carlo Martello tells him that in reality it was the Principalities that he had addressed and with whom they are turning—

Noi ci volgiam coi Principi celesti;

and Cunizza bids him note that the Thrones, the mirrors of God's judgments, rule a higher sphere—

Su sono specchi, voi dicete Troni.

His object clearly is to manifest the correspondence between the spirits of the sphere and the sphere itself with its special order of celestial intelligences, and it is the Principalities who guide the heaven of Venus, "in order that whatever is in the chief place may exercise lordship with all love and may join love with lordship."

Folco of Marseilles, of whose fame Cunizza had just spoken, is the last of the penitent lovers to reveal himself to Dante. Lover and troubadour, then monk, bishop and persecutor of the Albigenses, he who was a poet on earth is now in Heaven singing in union with the Seraphim. And again comes that sentiment which at first does indeed seem, as Cunizza had said, hard to comprehend:—

Non però qui si pente, ma si ride,
Non della colpa, ch'a mente non torna,
Ma del valor ch'ordinò e provide.

Par. ix. 103.[1]

[1] Yet here is no repenting, but we smile,
Not at the fault, which comes not back to mind,
But at the power which ordered and foresaw.
LONGFELLOW.

He speaks of the love sins of his youth, but, like Cunizza, remembers them only that he may sing for ever of the mercies of God and contemplate the wonders of Divine Providence. Grief for past sin is absorbed in happiness in the divine mercy and in gratitude for forgiveness. For, in Dante's allegory, both Lethe and Eunoë have been drunken of. Intellectual remembrance of these past evils remains to the soul, but, as far as regards sensible experience, they are wholly forgotten: *La colpa a mente non torna.* "In the city of God," says St. Augustine, "the soul will be oblivious of sin, oblivious of sufferings, and yet not so oblivious of its deliverance as to be ungrateful to its deliverer."

The spirit that is enjoying the highest degree of beatitude amongst those that appear in this third Heaven is Rahab of Jericho, flashing like a sunbeam in clear water. When Christ at His Passion descended into Limbo and triumphantly drew forth the souls of the just, Rahab was taken up first into this planet.

Da questo cielo, in cui l'ombra s'appunta
Che il vostro mondo face, pria ch'altr'alma
Del trionfo di Cristo fu assunta.
Ben si convenne lei lasciar per palma
In alcun cielo dell'alta vittoria,
Che s'acquistò con l'una e l'altra palma;
Perch'ella favorò la prima gloria
Di Josuè in su la Terra Santa,
Che poco tocca al papa la memoria.
Par. ix. 119.[1]

[1] Into this heaven, where ends the shadowy cone
Cast by your world, before all other souls
First of Christ's triumph was she taken up.
Full meet it was to leave her in some heaven,
Even as a palm of the high victory,
Which he acquired with one palm and the other,

For to the mediæval mind Josue is a type of the Saviour Himself, and Rahab of the Church saved by Christ's blood from the ruin of the world. The scarlet cord which she hung in the window is a symbol of that precious blood shed in His passion, and the two spies whom she received from Josue represent the two Testaments which the Church has received from God. Rahab is the last soul who appears within the earth's shadow, as a type of the Church which should guide men beyond that shadow. There is possibly also in these lines a trace of that yearning for a Crusade, of which we catch a breath elsewhere in the Divine Comedy, that noble ideal of the Middle Ages which echoes again from Petrarch's verse, finds utterance in the dying words of England's hero-King Henry V, and perhaps dies away in the music of Tasso's song and the glowing colours of Paul Veronese's votive pictures of Lepanto. Rahab's aid to Josue affords Dante an opportunity for a characteristic outburst, beginning with this rebuke of the papal forgetfulness of the Holy Land. At certain important points in his ecstatic pilgrimage, Dante gives special utterance to these stern protests, usually coupled with an expectation of better things to come. At the sphere of Venus the shadow of the earth ends, and the first division of Paradise is completed. To mark his passage to a higher region, Dante, through Folchetto, utters his *grido* against both Florence and the Pope. The golden florin stamped with the Florentine lily is the accursed flower that leads the flock astray, and turns the shepherd to a wolf. For it the Scriptures and the Doctors of the Church are neglected, and only the Decretals studied. Intent upon this, the Pope

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Because she favoured the first glorious deed
Of Joshua upon the Holy Land,
That little stirs the memory of the Pope.
LONGFELLOW.

and Cardinals have no leisure to think of Nazareth! But deliverance is at hand for the sacred places of Rome—

Tosto libere fien dell'adultero.

It is impossible to decide whether this prophecy refers to the death of Boniface VIII, who was supposed to have wrested the Church, *La bella Donna*, by simony and fraud from her true spouse St. Celestine V (Cf. *Inf.* xix. 55—57); or to the transference of the papal chair to Avignon; or merely to Dante's vague hope, so often expressed in the Divine Comedy, of the deliverer to come. Now that he is about to leave not only the earth but its very shadow below him, Dante would mark the point by uttering again his protest against avarice and corruption, his belief in his ideal and chosen Rome—*Vaticano e l'altre parti elette di Roma*, chosen by God for the seat of Pontiff and Emperor alike; and, possibly, by implication, his never extinguished hope of the purification of the Church and the restoration of the Empire.

Chapter III.

PRUDENCE AND FORTITUDE.

I. THE HEAVEN OF THE SUN.

"Optavi, et datus est mihi sensus; et invocavi et venit in me spiritus Sapientiæ; et præposui illam regnis et sedibus, et divitias nihil esse duxi in comparatione illius." *Liber Sapientiæ.*

The method employed by Dante to give greater solemnity to his ascent beyond earth's shadow to the Sun may be compared with that of his ascent from the Earthly Paradise to the Moon in the first Canto. There was a pause in the action at the end of the *Purgatorio;* the narrative was interrupted by that sublime prologue in which the poet touched upon the glory of God, the order of the Universe and the Eternal Law. After that he had commenced the actual account of his ascent by defining the season of the year and the time of day. So now in the same way, when about to ascend to a higher stage of knowledge and bliss, not merely above the earth but beyond the very shadow of it, there is a corresponding pause in the action after the end of the ninth Canto. There is, as it were, a new prologue at the beginning of the tenth Canto; Dante once more sings of the creation and the order of the Universe, and then returns to the matter of his song with another reference to the noble season of his ascent:—

Guardando nel suo Figlio con l'Amore
Che l'uno e l'altro eternalmente spira,
Le primo ed ineffabile Valore
Quanto per mente o per occhio si gira
Con tanto ordine fe', ch'esser non puote
Senza gustar di Lui chi ciò rimira.
Par. x. 1.[1]

Creation is the work of all three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. The Universe was created by the Father through His Word and through His Love; just as a great masterpiece is produced by the power of an artist, through the idea which he has conceived in his intellect and through his will to make manifest that idea in a work of art. He who contemplates the order of the Universe will learn something of the First Cause; for Dante has said in the first Canto that the order of the Universe is the form that makes it like to God, so that rational beings may see therein the image of the Divine perfection. Similarly Savonarola in a fine passage of the *Triumphus Crucis* shows how philosophers, by contemplating the admirable order, the grandeur and beauty of this visible world, may arrive at a knowledge of the power and glory of the Creator. So from creation Dante now passes to the order of the Universe and the dependence of the order of the world upon that of the heavens, bidding his readers raise their thoughts with him to that part of the heavens in which the Sun then was,

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[1] Looking into His Son with all the Love
Which each of them eternally breathes forth,
The Primal and unutterable Power
Whate'er before the mind or eye revolves
With so much order made, there can be none
Who this beholds without enjoying Him.
LONGFELLOW.

For *occhio* of line 4 there is an alternative reading *loco : per mente o per loco*, whatever can be conceived of by the intellect or impressed upon the senses.

and there contemplate the divine art of God of which nature is the visible expression. As an example of the perfection of the divine art, Dante touches slightly upon the marvellous order by which, according to the notions of his time, the higher celestial bodies are moved and rule the lower, so that the stars may exert their due influence needed by earthly things:—

Per satisfare al mondo che li chiama.

For by the least deviation from this divine order, much of the virtue in the heavens would be in vain and order upon earth would degenerate into chaos. But, since the subject of the poem is not astronomy but the state of souls after death, Dante leaves the question to be worked out in detail by the curious reader, and turns from it to the matter of his true inspiration:—

Quella materia ond'io son fatto scriba.

And just as he had commenced the "executive part" of the *Paradiso* by describing the Sun at the spring equinox, conjoined with the constellation of Aries in the most favourable season; so here he preludes his entrance into the Sun, by reminding us that it was at this season of the spring equinox that it was granted him to ascend above earth's shadow into the *ministro maggior della natura.*

The Sun is the fitting sphere for those souls whose writing and teaching shed such a splendour of philosophical illumination over the Middle Ages. The higher degree of beatitude of these spirits, as compared with those who had appeared within the earth's shadow, is shown by their increased glory, their appearing now as surpassingly vivid lights, as so many suns apparent against the burning background of the Sun because more brilliant even than it. And a step further is indicated in the ascent beyond sense to the

suprasensible. The splendour of these spirits is such that, although we can believe in it and base a desire upon that belief, yet the poet cannot even convey it to the imagination:—

Le fantasie nostre son basse
A tanta altezza,

"our phantasies are too lowly for such a height," for the phantasy, or imagination, is a material faculty, an internal power of the sensuous order, and can only form a sensible impression. No sensuous impression can be formed of the glory of these spirits. Their ineffable song likewise marks their higher degree of beatitude; it cannot be transported from Paradise. And since the knowledge of the Divine Essence is one of the goals of sacred science, there are a peculiar number of references to the Blessed Trinity throughout the cantos dealing with this sphere of the Doctors; it is seen even in the *tre volte*, the three circlings which the first garland of these blessed spirits makes round Dante and Beatrice.

From within the light that leads this first circle of twelve glowing souls of doctors and teachers, the glorified spirit of St. Thomas Aquinas addresses Dante. Since the poet is so privileged by divine grace, all the blessed are eager to satisfy his desire of knowledge: to refuse would be to do violence to their blissful nature. Dante had said to Casella:—

Per tornare altra volta
Là dove son, fo io questo viaggio. [1]

And this hope of his is confirmed now in the assurance of

To return once more
There where I am, I make this journey.
Purg. ii.

St. Thomas that the grace divine, source of true and ever growing love—

> Ti conduce su per quella scala,
> U' senza risalir nessun discende.[1]

So the Angelical Doctor names the twelve saints of his circle; and with true humility before naming himself he indicates his master, Albertus Magnus of Cologne. Dante commences his saints of the Sun with Albert, because it was mainly that Dominican's work to reconcile Aristotle with Christianity, and so enthrone the Stagirite in the supreme tyrannical position of authority for the mediæval mind. Next is Gratian, an Italian Benedictine of the twelfth century, *vere gratia plenus et gratus Deo et mundo*, who by his *Concordia* reconciled ecclesiastical and civil law; and with him the more famous Augustinian, Peter the Lombard, the Master of the *Sentences*, which was perhaps the most important treatise of its kind in the middle ages before the rising of that great luminary of the schools, St. Thomas, and in which its author "desired with the poor widow to cast something out of our poverty into the treasury of the Lord." Fairest of all in this sphere shines Solomon, concerning whose salvation the men of the Middle Ages doubted; and the words of St. Thomas touching his profound wisdom raise a difficulty in Dante's mind to be solved later. Next to him is Dionysius the Areopagite, regarded as the supreme authority on the nature and function of Angels; Orosius, Boethius, Isidore of Seville, Bede, Richard of St. Victor and Sigieri of Brabant follow. We know from the *Convito* how much Dante was indebted to Boethius, the sainted

[1] Conducts thee upward by that stair,
Where without reascending none descends.
Par. x.

soul who from exile and martyrdom came to this peace of Paradise; a martyr at the hands of Theoderic the Goth, if not for the Catholic Faith against the Arians, at least for the liberty of Rome from the barbarians. It was doubtless from the *De Consolatione Philosophiæ* that Dante took the idea of representing Philosophy as "a lady full of sweetness, adorned with virtue, wonderful in knowledge, glorious in liberty." Richard of St. Victor, superhuman in contemplation,—

Che a considerar fu più che viro,

is to be regarded as one of Dante's chief masters in the mystical flights of the *Paradiso;* for in the Letter to Can Grande, when speaking of the power of the human intellect to soar to these sublime regions, the poet justifies his stupendous work by an appeal to the writings of this great Augustinian mystic. It has been said that Richard's writings on contemplation form a scientific treatment of the mystic life;[1] and we can trace to some extent in the *Paradiso* his theory of the six steps of contemplation, by which the soul mounts ever upward until it reaches the "impenetrable mysteries of God which transcend all reason", and at last enters into ecstatic alienation, losing all thought of present things and wholly immersed in things divine.

In the last of these spirits, Sigieri who *sillogizzò invidiosi veri*, that is, urged and proved truths that gained for him only undeserved hatred and accusations of heresy, it is not too fanciful to suppose a half intended reference to Dante himself, his true political patriotism and the wise lessons he would have taught the Florentine republic, repaid only with hostility and injustice. It may be taken as a companion

[1] VAUGHAN, *St. Thomas of Aquin.* Vol. I.

picture to that of Romeo. If so, all bitterness is drowned in the celestial melody with which the tenth Canto ends, as the matin music of the Church to her divine Spouse.

In the next Canto Dante, through St. Thomas, is about to discourse upon the most perfect example of renunciation that the world had known, and to rebuke those who, having ostensibly vowed themselves to a life of high perfection, were still greedy for the things of earth. He commences, therefore, with a denunciation of various occupations that entangle the hearts and minds of men and keep them fettered below, not tending to that true felicity of which he is now having a foretaste in his glorious reception into Heaven with Beatrice. An old writer, quoted by Benvenuto, says, *Si Paradisus in hoc mundo est, in claustro vel in scholis est:* "If Paradise is in this world, it is in the cloister or the schools."

The question concerning the Dominican order, which St. Thomas proceeds to solve for Dante, merely means that the poet for artistic purposes feigns not to comprehend the excellence at which the Dominicans ought to aim, and would know what the ideal is that the friar sets before his eyes, and how it is that they have so fallen. Aquinas therefore first shows him what a great work had been intended by the Divine Providence for the Dominican and Franciscan orders to accomplish, in union with the celestial Powers, in combating the powers of darkness, and what a high standard of perfection had been set for them in the example of their founders. The inscrutable Providence of God appointed two guides to bring His Spouse the Church safely to Him, free from heresy and inflamed with love; and these were the seraphic Francis and the cherubical Dominic, whose work and praise are inseparably united. St. Thomas, as a Dominican, sings the panegyric of St. Francis. He rose upon the world from Assisi as the Sun

from the East in most resplendent summer; and, before Dante, St. Bonaventura had applied to St. Francis the text in the Apocalypse: "And I saw another Angel ascending from the East, having the seal of the living God." His mystical marriage with Poverty, the widow of Christ, is sung of, the foundation of his order and its approbation by Innocent and Honorius. We hear of his preaching to the Soldan in his thirst for martyrdom; and, lastly, of how he returned to Italy and received that wondrous mystical confirmation and seal in the Stigmata, from Christ Himself upon Mount Alvernia:—

> Nel crudo sasso, intra Tevere ed Arno,
> Da Cristo prese l'ultimo sigillo,
> Che le sue membra due anni portârno.[1]
> *Par.* xi. 106.

Two years later he died, as he had lived, in the arms of his most dear Lady and mystical spouse Poverty, bequeathing her to his friars as his most precious possession.

In one of the poems ascribed to St. Francis there occurs a passage concerning love and order, in which may be seen the basis of the whole moral structure of the *Purgatorio*, the soul's purgation from disordered love: *Ordina quest' Amore, o tu che m'ami*, "Set love in order, thou that lovest me." St. Francis made his own life one sacred poem, not written but lived, and the episodes of the mystical marriage with Poverty and of the reception of the Stigmata are its two most lyrical passages. In his life and legend the allegorising spirit of the Middle Ages took living form. Indeed, if we are to credit the account given by St. Bonaventura of the apparition of the three Ladies, Poverty,

[1] On the hard rock, between Tiber and Arno, he took from Christ the final seal which his members for two years bore.

Chastity and Obedience, to him and his friars, the Angels themselves did not disdain to take the form of abstract personifications and perform a little miracle play in his honour. The Marriage with Poverty, perhaps the finest of the four frescoes which Giotto painted over the tomb of the Saint at Assisi, is a most precious artistic commentary on Dante's lines. Christ standing upon a rock unites St. Francis to his chosen bride, who is haggard and careworn, clothed in ragged and patched garments, barefooted and girded with a cord. Roses and lilies spring up behind her and encircle her head, she wears the aureole and has wings, though weak, but thorns and briars are around her feet. Hope and Love are her bridesmaids; Hope clothed in green with uplifted hand, and Love crowned with flame-coloured flowers and holding a burning heart. A dog is barking at the Bride, and boys insulting her with sticks and stones, but all around are bands of angelic witnesses, their flowing raiment and mighty wings glowing with rainbow hues. Dante follows St. Bonaventura in regarding the Stigmata as the last supreme confirmation of the work of St. Francis. The reception of this *ultimo sigillo*, this final seal, is the culmination of the mystical divine love of the middle ages; when the mountain of Alvernia seemed all aflame to the country round, and the voice of the seraphic apparition was heard: *Tu sei il mio Gonfaloniere*, "Thou art my standard-bearer." Love and knowledge are the themes of Dante's Paradise; and, in like manner, the consecration of knowledge is seen in the legend of Aquinas himself, where he offered up his completed *Summa* before a Crucifix, and a voice came from the wood and was answered by the Saint: *Thoma, bene scripsisti de Me: quam ergo recipies pro tuo labore mercedem? Domine, non aliam praeter Te.* These two legends are indeed priceless and should stand together. Bonaventura closes his life of St. Francis in a fine burst of poetical

mysticism, of which there seems an echo in more than one passage of the Divine Comedy:—

"Then glory securely in the glory of the Cross, O glorious standard-bearer of Christ, for, commencing from the Cross, thou hast walked according to the rule of the Cross; and ending thy course in the Cross, by the testimony of the Cross thou dost make known to all the faithful the greatness of thy glory in Heaven. Let those who go forth from Egypt follow thee in safety; for, the sea having been divided by the rod of the Cross of Christ, they will pass through the desert, and having crossed the Jordan of mortality they will enter into the promised land of the living, through the wondrous power of the Cross."

What then must have been the greatness of St. Dominic, to have been a worthy colleague of such a man in guiding the bark of Peter! This does St. Thomas turn from St. Francis to his own patriarch, answering more directly Dante's difficulty. Those that follow St. Dominic rightly lay up a goodly reward, but he bitterly rebukes the degenerate state of the Dominicans at the epoch of the vision, and their deviations from the pure and stern rule of their founder. Greedy for the new pasturage of ecclesiastical dignities and honours, they return to the fold like sheep without milk, with neither good example to set nor sound doctrine to teach.

To exemplify more completely the lessons of this sphere, a second circle of great teachers is introduced. At the conclusion of the discourse of St. Thomas, there is one of those celestial dances, so quaint to our modern notions, which constitute Dante's method of expressing heavenly joy; a second garland of spirits thus encircles the first, joining in their motion and in their song like a double

rainbow or an echo. From this new group of spirits St. Bonaventura, Cardinal of the Church and general of the Franciscans, chants the panegyric of St. Dominic, for he and St. Francis should ever be glorified together. In time of need God succoured His people with these two champions, who worked for the same end and co-operated with the celestial Powers, who preside over the sphere of the Sun, in leading the soldiery of Christ against the powers of darkness; the bridegroom of Poverty by his example, and the lover of Faith by his teaching. So we hear of Dominic's birth at Calahorra in Castille and the wonders attending it, his marriage with the Faith, and the signs of his future greatness manifested even in infancy. Touching upon his learning, not to acquire worldly goods but for love of the true manna, Dante has a thrust at that excessive study of the Decretals, which he regards as one of the prime causes of the corruption of the clergy; and as Bonaventura proceeds to describe the confirmation of St. Dominic's task by the Pope, his persecution of the heretics, and the work of his followers in keeping alive the orthodoxy of the faith, Dante manages to hint at the degeneration of the holders of the papal chair since those rigid and austere days. As to the vexed question of how far St. Dominic himself was responsible for religious persecution, Dante's words certainly imply that, although a saint, he partook of the spirit of his age and was *ai nemici crudo.*

Now, for the chariot of the Bride to proceed safely upon its way, the two wheels must be of equal quality. Thus, from the greatness of St. Dominic, Bonaventura argues the excellence of his own master, St. Francis, the other wheel of the Church's chariot, and thence proceeds to lament the degenerate state of the Franciscans. They have turned back from the way along which St. Francis would have led them, and both the zealots and the lax section are

corrupting the order. It is doubtless, with reference to such corrupters of Franciscan simplicity as Dante's old foe the Cardinal Matteo d'Acquasparta, that Bonaventura describes himself as one who *nei grandi offici sempre posposi la sinistra cura*, that is, ever made worldly interest take the second place; and, for the same reason, the first two spirits of his glorious circle whom he indicates to Dante are not those of great doctors or theologians, but of two humble and simple-hearted friars, the barefooted *poverelli* Illuminato and Agostino, who did indeed follow in the steps of St. Francis as he willed, and so, although they had no doctrine to teach but that of their own good example and renunciation, have illumined the world as much as if they had been among the greatest teachers of the schools.

There are the learned doctors also in this group, whom St. Bonaventura names, and prophets too, both of the old law and the new. Hugh of St. Victor, the master of Richard and of Peter the Lombard, was another of the mystical Augustinian theologians of the monastery of St. Victor, where that famous school of philosophy had been founded by William of Champeaux when he left his chair at Paris before the brilliant attacks of Abelard. Peter Comestor, the ecclesiastical historian, ended his days in the same abbey. The logician, Peter of Spain, is interesting as illustrating Dante's treatment of the Popes; he is the only Pope of Dante's own time who appears in Paradise, and the poet makes no reference to his having been elevated to the Papacy as John XXI. He had been much maligned during his life and at his death, and the fact of his having suffered injustice from the tongues of men probably influenced Dante's treatment of him. Nathan is the only Old Testament spirit of this group, as a type of those who taught the great to know themselves and rebuked sin in high places. Then come Chrysostom; St. Anselm; Ælius Donatus, the

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grammarian; Rabanus Maurus, a copious theological writer of the ninth century; and last of all, by St. Bonaventura's side, shines the Calabrian abbot Joachim of Flora, one, like Dante himself, endowed with the prophetic spirit, and who, like Dante, under cover of this prophetic spirit fearlessly assailed corruption in high places.

The thirteenth Canto opens with another of those strange celestial dances and songs, which move the admiration of Dante's earlier commentators. Imagine twenty-four of the brightest stars that adorn the firmament to be formed into two constellations, each composed of twelve stars disposed circlewise, and to be thus whirling round a fixed pole in two concentric circles but in opposite directions, and a faint notion will be obtained of this heavenly phenomenon. Benvenuto waxes enthusiastic over it, and a more modern commentator has quoted it as an instance of Dante's teaching as to the proper use of the imagination. Apt or not, these illustrations ever afford the poet opportunities for exquisite transcripts from nature, above all from the ever varying pageantry of the heavens: "Can I not from any corner of the earth behold the sun and the stars?"—that famous letter had said, still usually ascribed to him, in which the amnesty is so scornfully refused. The song of these doctors is upon the mysteries of the Blessed Trinity and the union of the Divine and the Human Natures in the Person of the Word. Although to comprehend these mysteries in a lesser degree was also the beatitude of the spirits within the earth's shadow, it is not until that shadow has been surmounted that this is so clearly indicated.

Dante's difficulty concerning the wisdom of Solomon is now solved. It seems to the poet that what had been said in the tenth Canto, following the words of the Scriptures, implies that the wisdom of Solomon was greater than that of Adam before and Christ afterwards; and, since Adam and the

humanity of Christ were created immediately by God, surely they must have had all knowledge and intellectual light possible to human nature infused into them by God. St. Thomas solves the question, explaining the various grades of perfection in God's creation and the intervention of secondary causes. All things, whether immortal and incorruptible, or mortal and corruptible, are finite images of the Creator. They issue from the uncreated Light of Lights, and so are splendours of the Idea which is the Word. This divine light is seen reflected more or less imperfectly in all creatures, for in His creation there are grades of perfection from the nine choirs of Angels down to the elements. Since the Angels are perfectly immaterial, they reflect the least imperfect ray from that most pure *Act* which is God; as we pass lower and lower down through the grades of creation, this reflection gets feebler and feebler. God is infinite perfection; He is immutable; He alone is pure Act. All created things are both act and potentiality: act in respect of what they are, potentiality in respect of what they may become; the nearer to God, the more act and the less potentiality. The Angels are pure act relatively, not in the sense in which God alone is pure Act. The lower we descend in the scale of creation, actuality diminishes and potentiality increases, until we come to what Dante calls the *ultime potenze* and *brevi contingenze*, the ultimate potentialities and brief contingencies, which are almost all potentiality and can readily cease to exist. Such are creatures of the lowest order produced by the motion and influence of the heavens, with seed or without. There is, again, the distinction between things created immediately by God and those produced by means of second causes, whereby the archetypal idea, *il segno ideale* or "ideal signet", is more or less perfectly expressed. The substantial form of anything is the likeness of a Divine Idea stamped upon matter. If

the matter were in perfect condition and the heavens in full working order, then the created thing would be perfect, too, and would perfectly express the Divine Idea:—

La luce del suggel parrebbe tutta.[1]

But often the matter does not fully lend itself to the influence of these second causes or the heavens, which themselves have not everywhere equally preserved the virtue which God has communicated to them, and then the *segno ideale* will not be perfectly expressed. For nature works like an artist who knows his craft (*ha l'abito dell'arte*), but whose hand trembles when he gets weary; nature being God's instrument of creation when He makes use of second causes, and the "habit of the art" being the influence or virtue with which He has endowed it. Now where God creates immediately, without making use of second causes, the things created are most perfect:—

Però se il caldo Amor, la chiara Vista
Della prima Virtù dispone e segna,
Tutta la perfezion quivi s'acquista.
Par. xiii. 79.[2]

That is, when the Blessed Trinity disposes the matter and seals the form. And since the first man and the Humanity of our Saviour were thus created immediately, and without any intervention of second causes, certainly in them human nature was in absolute perfection:—

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[1] The brilliance of the seal would all appear.

[2] If then the fervent Love, the Vision clear,
Of primal Virtue do dispose and seal,
Perfection absolute is there acquired.
LONGFELLOW.

Virtù here means *Power*, in reference to the First Person of the Blessed Trinity. Cf. *Inf.* i. 140:— *Sapienza e amore e virtute.*

L'umana natura mai non fue,
Nè fia, qual fu in quelle due persone.[1]

After all this, the reconciliation of the difficulty seems a little inadequate. Solomon was not the wisest of men, but the wisest of kings, and in that sense alone was his wisdom so peerless. He merely chose *regal prudenza*, the wisdom sufficient for a king: "An understanding heart to judge thy people." The words of Aquinas, following the Scriptures, had reference only to kings:—

Ai regi, che son molti, e i buon son rari.

Thus there is no contradiction, though, after the profound arguments that led up to it, the modern reader feels irreverently inclined to exclaim with Desdemona: "O most lame and impotent conclusion!"

Arguing from Dante's difficulty, St. Thomas utters a warning against rash and inconsiderate judgment. Learn not to absolutely assert or deny things, unless quite certain of the full bearing of the question. Too often a hastily conceived opinion misleads us, and self-conceit then fetters our intellect to the error. It is worse than useless to search for truth illogically, for ignorance is better than the errors into which such men fall. And thence follows a practical moral, illustrated by the similes of the rose upon the thorn that seemed dead, and the ship wrecked at the harbour's mouth, not to judge of the ultimate fate of a human soul, nor flatter ourselves that we can see such a one as he is in the sight of God. The lesson is doubtless an admirable one, and yet we may be devoutly thankful

[1] Human nature never yet has been,
Nor will be, what it was in those two persons.
LONGFELLOW.

that Dante did not apply it to himself. Had he done so, the world might have been poorer by the loss of the *Inferno*.

As soon as St. Thomas has ceased, Beatrice asks the blessed spirits to solve a question, not yet formed in Dante's thought, concerning the splendour of the body after the resurrection. Will this dazzling light eternally clothe them round; and, if the sense of sight is with their glorified bodies, how can it bear the exceeding light? A still more joyous dance and hymn to the Blessed Trinity greets the question, which is answered by the divinest light, evidently Solomon. Dr. Scartazzini points out that Solomon is probably selected because of what is said in *Ecclesiastes* (iii. 18—22), where the deaths of men and beasts seem spoken of as apparently much the same: "Who knoweth if the spirit of the children of Adam ascend upward, and if the spirit of the beasts descend downward." He is, as it were, answering himself at the same time. Throughout the eternal festivity of Paradise, this glory shall be radiated round the blessed. The brightness is in proportion to the love, love is consequent upon vision, and the intensity of the vision corresponds to grace supernaturally added to the natural powers of the human soul. Man cannot attain to his ultimate happiness by the exercise of his natural powers, for that ultimate and perfect happiness consists in the vision of the Divine Essence. When soul and body are reunited, the soul's perfection will be completed, for, according to St. Thomas: "The body belongs to the integrity of human beatitude, though not to its essence." Then will be poured forth upon the soul even more of the light that enables it to see God; vision, love and radiance will be increased. The body itself will be transfigured by the splendour of the soul, and the faculty of sight will then be strong to bear it with delight.

The fervent *Amen* that bursts from the two circles, showing desire of the resurrection of the body not only for themselves but for those who had been dear to them on earth, illustrates the rather curious article of the *Summa* (II—2, 18. 2), where St. Thomas discusses the question whether there is Hope in the blessed. He decides that neither Faith nor Hope can any longer exist in the saints of Paradise. They desire and pray for the beatitude of others not by the virtue of Hope, but rather from love of Charity. And although they still expect the glory of the body, they do not hope for it. The principal object of Hope is glory of the soul, and the glory of the body is so much less, in comparison to the glory of the soul, that it has not the character of something arduous for one who already possesses the glory of the soul; and so its expectation does not come under the definition of the object of Hope, which is future good, arduous, but possible of attainment.

Now follows that mysteriously beautiful episode of the third garland of spirits in the Sun, their apparition from afar like the brightening of the horizon before sunrise, or the appearing of stars in the sky as evening closes in. They suddenly approach, and Dante's eyes are dazzled:—

Ed ecco intorno, di chiarezza pari,
Nascere un lustro sopra quel che v'era,
A guisa d'orizzonte che rischiari:
E sì come al salir di prima sera
Comincian per lo ciel nuove parvenze,
Sì che la vista pare e non par vera;
Parvemi lì novelle sussistenze
Cominciar a vedere, e fare un giro
Di fuor dall'altre due circonferenze.
O vero sfavillar del Santo Spiro,
Come si fece subito e candente
Agli occhi miei che, vinti, non soffriro!

Ma Beatrice sì bella e ridente
Mi si mostrò, che tra quelle vedute
Si vuol lasciar che non seguîr la mente.
Par. xiv. 67.[1]

Some have interpreted these lines as indicating a sudden vision of Angels, a crown of angelic subsistences surrounding these two rings of doctors and floating in a golden sea of light; others, again, have supposed that this new light comes from the next heaven. There can, however, be little doubt that Dante refers to a third ring of doctors, gradually appearing and then suddenly dazzling him. Benvenuto's idea is that, since the doctors were as many and as brilliant as the stars of heaven, Dante merely chose out a few of the chief for the first two garlands and relegated the rest to a third great circle inclosing these two, and that his eyes were dazzled because his intellect could not fully investigate the deep teaching of so many illustrious authors. Benvenuto seems to regard these new spirits as less bright

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[1] And lo! all round about of equal brightness
Arose a lustre over what was there,
Like a horizon that is clearing up.
And as at rise of early eve begin
Along the welkin new appearances,
So that the sight seems real and unreal,
It seemed to me that new subsistences
Began there to be seen, and make a circle
Outside the other two circumferences.
O very sparkling of the Holy Spirit,
How sudden and incandescent it became
Unto mine eyes, that vanquished bore it not!
But Beatrice so beautiful and smiling
Appeared to me, that with the other sights
That followed not my memory I must leave her.
LONGFELLOW.

than the others, which Dante's words certainly do not imply. Other early commentators suppose that he refers to authors that he personally had not been able to study or comprehend. It is, however, perfectly justifiable to see in this episode a mystically expressed prophecy of future discoveries and of scientists to come; an acknowledgment that there were truths which the mediæval schoolmen had not dreamed of, that a day would come when the world would no longer say with Dante himself in the *Convito: Assai basta alla gente per la grande autorità di Aristotile a sapere che questa terra è fissa e non si gira, e che essa col mare è centro del cielo*;[1] and that Evolution would yet have its word to say upon creation and the origin of man. Nor is it necessary to suppose this to be an entirely unconscious prophecy on Dante's part; he may possibly have come to see that the teaching of the age was completely inadequate on many points. It is a merely momentary glimpse of these new spirits that he catches. It is not, perhaps, altogether fanciful to notice that Beatrice does not offer any explanation, but rather hurries him upward; and we may remember how the Ecclesiastic Authority was not exactly going to show itself favourable to the discoveries of Galileo, and that Theology has not always been prepared to accept the results of even more recent scientific investigations.

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[1] *Convito* iii. 5. "It is quite enough for people on the great authority of Aristotle to know that this earth is fixed and does not revolve, and that it with the sea is the centre of the heavens."

II. THE HEAVEN OF MARS.

"Nos autem, cui mundus est patria velut piscibus aequor, quamquam Sarnum biberimus ante dentes et Florentiam adeo diligamus ut, quia dileximus, exilium patiamur injuste." DANTE, *De Vulgari Eloquentia.*

THE increased beauty and joy of Beatrice marks the ascent a step higher in the Eternal Palace, to the glowing red splendour of Mars, even more rosy than its wont for her coming. Dante is "translated to more lofty salvation", because a step nearer to the First Cause. His act of thanksgiving to God (*Par.* xiv. 88) marks this higher grade, and should be compared with the corresponding passages in which he returns thanks for his reception into the Moon (*Par.* ii. 46) and for his ascent to the Sun (*Par.* x. 55). Now he no longer needs the admonition of Beatrice to manifest his gratitude; and the words employed to express it, the holocaust with the whole heart and the speech of the heart, implying a complete offering of the whole being to God in thanksgiving, convey far more than those in which he had corresponded to her bidding in the first and even in the fourth Heaven. Then there appears to him in the depth of Mars a great image of the Crucified, blood-red, formed by glowing stars which are the souls of warriors of God, greater or less in size according to their degree of bliss. They move across and along the Cross, flashing with exultation where they meet or pass. Dante describes their

appearance by similes of the Galaxy and of the penetration of a ray of light into a shaded room, but protests his utter inability to adequately express what he saw, and so draws a moral lesson: let the reader take up his own cross and follow Christ, and so at last come himself to see this vision. For this is the sphere that the Celestial Virtues rule, the Angels that imitate the Divine Strength and Fortitude, and render all things in God "strongly and manfully valiant in chaste and masculine virtue" (Colet on Dionysius); and therefore the warrior saints whom they influenced are grouped to form that sacred sign whereby Christ taught us that true virtue and strength is endurance.

It is not quite clear to what extent these souls are to be regarded as necessarily enjoying a higher degree of bliss than those in the Sun. After the earth's shadow has once been passed, the progression is not as obvious as in the lower heavens. Benvenuto supposes that, since the doctors and teachers fought for God with the tongue and pen, they did not merit so much as these warriors who fought with hand and sword for the precept of God in the old dispensation and the Catholic faith in the new. Most probably Dante would have us understand in general that this sphere represents a higher grade of perfection, as indicated by the greater beauty of Mars and of the souls that appear in it, without necessarily supposing that any special spirit in the Sun is enjoying a less perfect vision than one in this or another higher sphere, since there are clearly degrees in each.

A wondrous melody resounds along the Cross from these spirits, heard but only in part comprehended, the *Risurgi e Vinci*, the only words that come to him, being possibly connected with the 51st and 52nd chapters of Isaiah ("Arise, arise, put on thy strength"); and at first he is so rapt in ecstasy as not even to behold the in-

creased loveliness of Beatrice. Then the spirits forming the Cross of Mars in celestial charity cease their song. We have heard Beatrice in the fourth Canto admit some truth in the theory that to the stars is due both good and evil influence, *l'onor dell' influenza e il biasmo.* Therefore, on his first ascent into Mars, the hymn of the blessed souls that greeted Dante was (as far as he could comprehend it) an exhortation to follow the good influence of the planet, which tends to fortitude and constancy; but now, when about to learn more of this heaven and, especially, to hear of his own exile to be borne and of the injustice of others towards himself, he bases the opening of the fifteenth Canto upon love of charity, in opposition to the evil influence of Mars which inflames men to anger and strife. And, in his characteristic manner, he draws from the details of his vision moral teaching concerning the doctrines and practices of his Church. Just as, from the charity of the spirits of the Proud in the first terrace of Purgatory, he had passed on to the doctrine of prayer for the holy souls of the dead (*Purg.* xi. 31):—

Se di là sempre ben per noi si dice,
Di qua che dire e far per lor si puote
Da quei c'hanno al voler buona radice?
Ben si dèe loro altar lavar le note,
Che portâr quinci, sì che mondi e lievi
Possano uscire alle stellate ruote.[1]

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[1] If there good words are always said for us,
What may not here be said and done for them,
By those who have a good root to their will?
Well may we help them wash away the marks
That hence they carried, so that clean and light
They may ascend unto the starry wheels!
LONGFELLOW.

So here, from the charity of these warrior souls, he confirms the doctrine of the intercession of saints (*Par.* xv. 7):—

> Come saranno a giusti prieghi sorde
> Quelle sustanzie, che, per darmi voglia
> Ch'io le pregassi, a tacer fûr concorde?[1]

Like a falling star, a rosy light passing from the right arm across and down through the Cross, tender as Anchises to Æneas in Elysium, addresses Dante as his blood. Benvenuto notes that in Cacciaguida's words to Dante he is imitating the voice from Heaven in the Gospel: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." In the loveliness of the smile of Beatrice and the profound nature of the spirit's speech, at first beyond the conception of mortal intellect, the higher grade of glory of this sphere is indicated. When Cacciaguida bids Dante ask what he would know, the idea of the saints reading in God, all that it concerns them to see, is expressed with beautiful vividness. All alike possess the vision of the Divine Essence; and since they see the Cause of all things, the First or Principle of all, these blessed spirits see what flows from Him, just as from a clear idea of mathematical unity proceeds the knowledge of the other numbers. Again in Dante's answer, where he excuses himself for his inability to offer adequate thanks for his reception, God is described as *La Prima Egualità*, the First Equality, who, when manifested to the saints in Paradise, has made their love and wisdom equal. Love and knowledge in Him are equal, for all the divine perfections are identified in the Divine Essence, and He

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[1] How unto just entreaties shall be deaf
Those substances, which, to give me desire
Of praying them, with one accord grew silent?
LONGFELLOW.

has made His saints like Himself in this: "We know that when He shall appear we shall be like to Him; because we shall see Him as He is." But, with mortals, love and wisdom are not yet equal; *voglia* and *argomento*, affection and power of expressing it, are diversely feathered in their flight; the former outspeeds and anticipates the latter, and thus the poet can only utter his gratitude with the silent language of the heart for this paternal welcome:—

Però non ringrazio
Se non col cuore alla paterna festa.

Side by side in Dante's heart with his ideal Rome, the divinely ordained seat of Pope and Emperor, there is the corresponding image of an ideal Florence, *la bellissima e famosissima figlia di Roma*, when Florence within her ancient walls was peaceful, temperate and pure:—

Si stava in pace, sobria e pudica.

So now, after Cacciaguida has secured Dante's good works for his son Aldighiero, Dante's great-grandfather who is still in the first terrace of Purgatory expiating the sin of pride, he proceeds to give such an ideal picture of the Florentine republic as Dante supposes it to have been in the twelfth century, when such noble and simple-minded republicans as Bellincion Berti and the great Guelph families of the Nerli and Vecchietti passed through its streets and served the state. It is a poetic ideal of a mediæval Free Commune, before the corrupting influence of France had fallen upon it, and when the world of the youths and ladies of Boccaccio's *Decamerone* was still in the far future. The simple antique customs of the women, the upright and unpretending lives of the men, are contrasted with the ever increasing luxury, immorality and effeminacy of the Florence

that Dante knew. Then the spirit of the old Florentine soldier passes to his own history; his birth in that ideal Florence, his baptism in its ancient Baptistery; and, with an incidental thrust at the papal neglect of the Holy Land, he ends with his own military exploits and knighthood under Conrad III, and his death as a Crusader at the hands of the Infidels. "A right valiant warrior," exclaims Benvenuto, "he served under a Christian prince, fought for Christian Faith against the paynim, and died a soldier of Christ."

Following this, the sixteenth Canto fittingly opens with a sentence on true nobility. In the *Convito* Dante had rebuked the view that those are noble who are descended from men of worth; and taught that it is in the soul that true nobleness must be sought, that it is a purely spiritual gift of God to the individual soul and a seed of eternal felicity. But now, in the heaven of Mars, he has just heard how his ancestor had been knighted by the Emperor himself and had died a hero's death, and at first he is disposed to exult a little vainglorioously and admit that, after all, there is something in our *poca nobiltà di sangue*:—

O poca nostra nobiltà di sangue!
Se gloriar di te la gente fai
Quaggiù, dove l'affetto nostro langue,
Mirabil cosa non mi sarà mai;
Chè là, dove appetito non si torce,
Dico nel cielo, io me ne gloriai.
Par. xvi. 1.[1]

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[1] O thou our poor nobility of blood,
If thou dost make the people glory in thee
Down here where our affection languishes,
A marvellous thing it ne'er will be to me;
For there where appetite is not perverted,
I say in Heaven, of thee I made a boast.
LONGFELLOW.

But at once he recollects himself with a half rebuke of his own thought, and with a moral lesson to be drawn therefrom:—

> Ben sei tu manto che tosto raccorce,
> Sì che, se non s'appon di dìe in dìe,
> Lo tempo va dintorno con le force.[1]

Benvenuto da Imola has an interesting remark upon this passage, which illustrates his method of distinguishing between the literal and allegorical meanings of the poem. "Our author," he says, "was most noble with the true nobility of virtue and of knowledge; and yet he gloried in his mind when he heard narrated the ancient nobility of his blood. But here arises a pretty question. How could our author have had a desire of the vain glory of blood in Heaven, when such nobility is not there, nor can possibly be desired there where no sin can be? It must briefly be said that he is speaking of the *moral* Paradise; for he was now mentally, not really and truly in Heaven. Our author only wishes to say that so great and so strong is this appetite of glory, that it not only invades the earthly minds of men seeking the vain things of the world, but even the celestial minds of those who are bent upon the speculation of things divine, such as philosophers and theologians." This distinction is of wide application. It explains the presence of such evil things as the serpent and the siren in the *Purgatorio*. In the essential Purgatory of separated spirits purifying themselves, they can obviously have no place; they refer only to the moral Purgatory, wherein man is striving ever

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[1] Truly thou art a cloak that quickly shortens,
So that, unless we piece thee day by day,
Time goeth round about thee with his shears.
LONGFELLOW.

upward to attain the end for which God has ordained him.

After hearing of the greatness of his ancestor, Dante addresses him with the *Voi*. Up to now he had given the *tu* to all the other souls he had met with in his ecstatic pilgrimage. For Brunetto Latini alone in that most piteous cry of recognition, as he fixed his gaze upon the *cotto aspetto* of the old philosopher wandering in his agony over the sand beneath the rain of fire:—

Siete voi qui, Ser Brunetto!

and for Beatrice, is this ceremonious form of speech reserved. But in the next Canto Dante will return to the more familiar form; he employs it even with the Apostles in the eighth Heaven, and with St. Bernard, and with Beatrice herself in the last farewell where perfect love has cast aside all ceremony. It was supposed that the plural form was first given by Rome to Julius Cæsar, as a mark of respect when he united in his person all the offices of the republic, and there seems a touch of satire in the line that follows Dante's mention of this supposed act of Rome—

In che la sua famiglia men persevra.[1]

The early commentators say that at this time the Romans gave everyone the *tu*, and that only Tuscany and Lombardy preserved the custom of addressing with the *Voi*. It is, however, very probable that there is a reference intended to the resistance of Rome to the imperial power; they no longer persevere in reverence to the majesty of the Emperor, and there may even be a special rebuke to the papal adherents as the "family of Rome." It is curious to notice that

[1] Wherein her family less perseveres. *Par.* xvi. 11.

Dante himself uses the *tu* when he addresses the Emperor Henry VII in his letter in the first year of the Emperor's descent into Italy: *Tu, Cæsaris et Augusti successor.* However, he now repeats the *Voi* three times as he addresses Cacciaguida, as though to make quite sure his ancestor notes his politeness; while Theology in the person of Beatrice stands apart, since matters are to be discussed which do not come within her province, and smiles in kindly superiority at this little exhibition of human weakness.

Cacciaguida, with another of those varied representations of the increase of celestial joy by increased beauty of light and increased sweetness of speech, answers Dante's questions. He tells the date of his birth; 1091 or 1106, according to the reading adopted. As to the forerunners of Cacciaguida, it is evident that Dante knew nothing of them, except that they dwelt in the centre of the city near the Mercato Vecchio, in the ward named from the eastern gate of San Pietro, a sign of ancient origin. Therefore silence is best, and the sainted Crusader will not boast of our *poca nobiltà di sangue.* The population in his day was one fifth of what it was at the date of Dante's vision, but of purer blood: not yet had commenced the entrance of families from the country round into the old city, to which is due much of the degeneration of Dante's Florence from the Florence which Cacciaguida had known. Just as Dante's ideal of Italy, as garden of the Empire with Rome its sacred centre, stands side by side with his ideal of a united and peaceful Florence, so the same cause has ruined both—the relentless hostility of the Church to the Empire. Not only has all Italy suffered, as Dante had shown in *Purgatorio* vi., but even the individual cities have been wrecked, as he points out now. If man's two guides are at war, how can his life be passed in freedom and in peace? The successors of Peter have been no true parents to Cæsar, their first-born,

and have refused to let their light shine upon him;[1] or Cæsar would have been stronger to illuminate the world, and the feuds of Guelphs and Ghibellines would not have ruined Florence. The new families would not have been forced to enter the town, nor would the rights of the nobles have been usurped, nor their possessions lost; confusion of persons would not have arisen, which was ever the beginning of the downfall of cities.

In Cacciaguida's lament for the decay of the grand old Florentine families, Dante shows a kind of patriotic hero worship for the venerated names of these noble citizens of old, which comes out clearly all through the poem. In Hell, the very stain of their sins could not alienate such men as these from his reverence and affection. It cannot be said, however, that his picture in the *Paradiso* quite accords with some terrible passages in the *Inferno* concerning the morality of early Florentine society. And with it, as in a kind of running commentary, he weaves in many a bitter allusion and rebuke to his own contemporaries, sometimes obvious, sometimes so covert that it is not certain to what special individuals he alludes. Those open foes or false friends connected with his exile naturally receive due chastisement. Baldo d'Aguglione, the lawyer who drew up the decree in 1311 which confirmed the unjust sentence, is contemptuously denounced; the Cerchi, the cowardly or incapable heads of the Bianchi, come in for their share; and a monument of infamy is erected to the Adimari, from whose house came Boccaccio degli Adimari, who seized the poet's goods when he was exiled and exerted his influence to prevent his recall. Coming to the family of the Amidei, he fitly ends his account of the Florentine houses with their fatal quarrel with the Buondelmonti in 1215. Up to that date Florence had been

[1] Cf. *De Monarchia* iii. 16.

strong and united, but Buondelmonte's desertion of his betrothed at the instigation of Gualdrada Donati, and his subsequent murder at the foot of the statue of Mars, a victim to the god of war in the city's last day of peace, involved the Florentines in the factions of the Guelphs and Ghibellines. But the Canto closes, not in this note of misfortune, but with the triumphant sound of the united and victorious state of Florence as Cacciaguida had known it:—

> Con queste genti, e con altre con esse,
> Vid'io Fiorenza in sì fatto riposo,
> Che non avea cagion onde piangesse;
> Con queste genti vid'io glorioso
> E giusto il popol suo, tanto che il giglio
> Non era ad asta mai posto a ritroso,
> Nè per division fatto vermiglio.
>
> *Par.* xvi. 148.[1]

So victorious that never had a captured standard been reversed in derision by her foes; so just and united, that the colour of her lily had not been changed for party purposes (from white to red as by the Guelphs in 1251), nor the ensign of the republic stained crimson with the blood of her citizens. Both meanings may be implied in the last line.

From the Florence of Cacciaguida the passage is natural to Dante's own Florence, and her treatment of him. Whilst

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[1] With all these families, and others with them,
Florence beheld I in so great repose,
That no occasion had she whence to weep:
With all these families beheld so just
And glorious her people, that the lily
Never upon the spear was placed reversed,
Nor by division was vermiglion made.
LONGFELLOW.

guided by Virgil through Hell and Purgatory, he has heard grievous words of his own future life. Farinata had told him that he would soon learn from bitter experience how hard it was for a banished man to return to Florence; Brunetto Latini had warned him of the ingratitude of the Florentine people towards him, and that he would be forced to play a solitary part in their factions; Oderisi of Gubbio had darkly prophesied that, before long, his fellow citizens would make him know the bitterness of poverty and dependence upon others. But Virgil had bidden him await the full explanation till he should be reunited to Beatrice; so now, at her bidding, Dante questions his ancestor upon these ominous prophecies that he has heard; for, as clearly as we see that a triangle cannot contain two obtuse angles, so clearly do the elect behold these contingent things in their vision of God, to whom all things and times are present because He sees them all in Himself.[1] How it can be that the divine prescience does not render these contingent things necessary, nor deprive man of his free will, was one of those insoluble questions upon which the scholastic mind loved to exercise itself. Cacciaguida does not attempt to solve the problem here; he merely affirms that the divine prescience does not render these things necessary, just as a man who sees from afar a ship on a certain course does not thereby necessitate it to that course:—

> La contingenza, che fuor del quaderno
> Della vostra materia non si stende,
> Tutta è dipinta nel cospetto eterno.

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[1] Contingent things are those which are but might not have been, *contingent* as opposed to *necessary*, and here Dante especially means those things which depend upon the free acts determined by the human will. (CORNOLDI).

Necessità però quindi non prende,
Se non come dal viso, in che si specchia,
Nave che per corrente giù discende.
Par. xvii. 37.[1]

What Cacciaguida utters is obviously Dante's own autobiographical record: it is the history of his exile, written at a time of calm in the comparative peace of Ravenna. He can now look back upon his career and see where the blame lay. Dante's attitude will, of course, be remembered: he supposes the vision to have taken place in 1300, not quite two years before his exile, and that now, many years after the vision, he, as it were, remembers what was revealed to him then, and is relating it to the world.

Qual si partì Ippolito d'Atene
Per la spietata e perfida noverca,
Tal di Fiorenza partir ti conviene.
Questo si vuole, e questo già si cerca,
E tosto verrà fatto a chi ciò pensa
Là dove Cristo tutto dì si merca.
Par. xvii. 46.[2]

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[1] Contingency, that outside of the volume
Of your materiality extends not,
Is all depicted in the eternal aspect.
Necessity however thence it takes not,
Except as from the eye, in which 'tis mirrored,
A ship that with the current down descends.
LONGFELLOW.

There are no contingent things except in the material world. In God there is no succession, whereas in material things they follow each other like the leaves of a book. (SCARTAZZINI).

[2] As forth from Athens went Hippolytus,
By reason of his step-dame false and cruel,
So thou from Florence must perforce depart.
Already this is willed and this is sought for;
And soon it shall be done by him who thinks it,
Where every day the Christ is bought and sold.
LONGFELLOW.

Calumny at Florence and intrigue at Rome are to be the main causes of his exile. Dante's likening of himself to Hippolytus is a vigorous protest of innocence. His early commentators vaguely state that dishonourable proposals were made to him, and that their rejection in part caused his ruin. It is clear that Dante still held that the opposition, that he and his colleagues in the priorate had offered to the Pope's legate, Matteo d'Acquasparta, had made him a marked man in Rome. It will be remembered that, before this Franciscan "peacemaker" was sent, the Pope had secretly notified his intention to the German princes of the Empire of reducing Florence to submission, and had entered into an understanding with Corso Donati; to such an envoy, under such circumstances, a *non tali auxilio* could be the only answer of the patriotic Signoria. The Ottimo refers the *si vuole* to Pope Boniface and the *si cerca* to Corso Donati, and Benvenuto the *chi ciò pensa* to Corso Donati and Musciatto de' Franzesi, the latter of whom was mainly responsible for the coming of Charles of Valois. False reports will assail him, continues Cacciaguida, but the vengeance of God will punish the real offenders—the reference being either to the general misfortunes that fell upon Florence, or to the death of Boniface VIII and the terrible fate of Corso Donati, which his brother Forese had foretold in the sixth terrace of Purgatory.

Tu lascerai ogni cosa diletta
Più caramente: e questo è quello strale
Che l'arco dell'esilio pria saetta.
Tu proverai sì come sa di sale
Lo pane altrui, e com'è duro calle
Lo scendere e il salir per l'altrui scale.[1]

Par. xvii. 55.

[1] Thou shalt abandon everything beloved
Most tenderly, and this the arrow is
Which first the bow of banishment shoots forth.

Separation from all that is dearest to him and dependence upon others will be his lot. Uncongenial and unworthy companions will be his associates, until their conduct towards him will lead to their own ruin and force him to form a party by himself. The lines—

Sì che a te fia bello
Averti fatta parte per te stesso[1]—

have ever since been taken as the motto of Dante's political attitude. Verona will be his first refuge after separation from his fellow exiles, where the great Lombard, Bartolommeo della Scala, and then his more famous brother, Can Grande, will show him generous hospitality. The future greatness of the latter, who was nine years old in 1300, is foretold in Dante's splendid manner with passages that certainly recall to some extent the attributes of the *Veltro* of *Inferno* i.; and there is a final prophecy which would doubtless seem to coincide with the stupendous deeds to be performed by the *Messo di Dio* of *Purgatorio* xxxiii:—

E portera'ne scritto nella mente
Di lui, ma nol dirai — — E disse cose

Thou shalt have proof how savoureth of salt
The bread of others, and how hard a road
The going down and up another's stairs.
LONGFELLOW.

Among the things most tenderly beloved, both the Ottimo and Benvenuto mention Dante's wife; Benvenuto, following Boccaccio's theory, oddly adds the manuscript of the first seven Cantos of the *Inferno*, which Dante is supposed to have left behind him and afterwards recovered. Pietro Alighieri has nothing to say upon the subject; his commentary upon this Canto is mainly made up of long quotations from various philosophical writers, with scarcely a word about his father.

[1] So 'twill be well for thee
A party to have made thee by thyself.

Incredibili a quei che fia presente.[1]
Par. xvii. 91.

After the failure of the enterprise of Henry VII, Can Grande became the incarnation of the Ghibelline hopes, and in 1308 was elected captain of their league; so these incredible things might possibly be the slaying of the Giant and the Woman that the messenger of God is to perform. However, until the close of the fifteenth century, no commentator saw any connection between either of these passages (*Inf.* i. and *Purg.* xxxiii.) and the young tyrant of Verona. Nor has Cacciaguida only misfortunes to prophesy for Dante himself. Although this future is preparing for him, and very shortly, yet in his certainty of eternal fame he need not envy his foes; his life will reach into the future far beyond the punishment of their treachery.

Having thus heard what his future life is to be, Dante now desires counsel from his ancestor as to his conduct under these circumstances. In his high vision he has learnt things that will make him many enemies, if he faithfully relates them. He naturally doubts as to how his verses will be received by his contemporaries, and whether he may not be deprived of every place of refuge through this proclamation of justice; and yet, if he does not utter his *grido*, his fame with future generations will suffer:—

E s'io al vero son timido amico,
Temo di perder vita tra coloro
Che questo tempo chiameranno antico.
Par. xvii. 118.[2]

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[1] "And written in thy mind thou hence shalt bear
Of him, but shalt not say it"—and things he said
Incredible to those who shall be present.
LONGFELLOW.

[2] And if I am a timid friend to truth,

For Dante knew well his twofold mission, to rebuke and admonish his contemporaries, but to instruct and teach eternal truths to future ages as well. Cacciaguida, showing still greater joy at this sign that his descendant like himself is prepared to follow the good influence of the planet and its celestial movers, to "arise and conquer" in fortitude and endurance, gives the familiar answer and injunction:—

> Rimossa ogni menzogna,
> Tutta tua vision fa' manifesta;[1]

and let men take it as they will. Only the conscience stained with guilt or shame will feel the sting of his words. It will be better for them, too, in the long run; vital nourishment when digested, although bitter in the first taste. Above all, let him fearlessly assail vice in high places; for this very purpose there are shown to him especially famous spirits, the example of whose punishment, purgation or reward, will be the more efficacious. The best comment upon the spirit, in which Dante carried out this injunction, is that most noble passage in the *De Monarchia*, where Dante opens the third Book with the words of Daniel: He hath shut the lions' mouths and they have not hurt me, forasmuch as before Him justice was found in me. Since Truth from its changeless throne appeals to him, he need not fear the indignation of men: "I will

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> I fear lest I may lose my life with those
> Who will hereafter call this time the olden.
>
> LONGFELLOW.

[1] All falsehood laid aside,
Make manifest thy vision utterly.

Ibid.

therefore take confidence from the words of Daniel in which the power of God, the shield of the defenders of truth, is set forth; and according to the exhortation of St. Paul, 'putting on the breast-plate of faith', and in the heat of that coal which one of the Seraphim had taken off the altar and laid on the lips of Isaiah, I will enter on the present contest, and, by the arm of Him who delivered us by his blood from the powers of darkness, drive out from the lists the wicked and the liar in the sight of all the world."[1]

Following Cacciaguida's admonition, the eighteenth Canto opens with one of the most beautiful passages in the *Paradiso*, illustrating the relations between Dante and Beatrice, whether regarded literally or allegorically. Into his mind, while tempering the sweet with the bitter, the sweetness of everlasting fame with the bitterness of unjust exile and unmerited sufferings, a thought apparently enters of vengeance upon his foes. But all resentment passes away at the words of Beatrice:—

> E quella donna, ch'a Dio mi menava,
> Disse: Muta pensier, pensa ch'io sono
> Presso a colui ch'ogni torto disgrava.
>
> *Par.* xviii. 4.[2]

In the literal sense, because Beatrice in Heaven would be his advocate with God, see his needs and sustain him by her prayers, thus radiating a sweeter and gentler influence from Paradise upon her lover on earth. And in the allegorical

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[1] *De Monarchia* iii. 1. Church's translation.

[2] And the Lady who to God was leading me
Said: "Change thy thought; consider that I am
Near unto Him who every wrong disburdens."
LONGFELLOW.

sense we are to understand, as Benvenuto notes, that Theology removes the mind from all desire of vengeance, showing that nothing remains unavenged with Him who has said, Vengeance is Mine. Thus Dante declares:—

> Rimirando lei, lo mio affetto
> Libero fu da ogni altro disire,[1]

as the unworthiness of vindictive desire is burned away in the pure fire of love. He gazes upon her transcendent beauty, from which the divine rays are reflected, until she bids him turn back from this contemplation to behold the warriors of the Cross:—

> Volgiti ed ascolta,
> Chè non pur ne' miei occhi è Paradiso,[2]

that is, allegorically, beatitude must be sought after not only in the contemplation of theological truth, but also in following the examples set by valiant men. These famous spirits of Mars are named by Cacciaguida and flash across the Cross like lightning, as soldiers moving to battle at the word of command, or charging at the call of the trumpet. For these are they who were influenced by the celestial Virtues that rule this fifth Heaven, to imitate the divine fortitude by being "strongly and manfully valiant in chaste and masculine virtue", and who did mighty deeds on earth like the signs and wonders that these Angels effect in the

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[1] Gazing upon her, my affection was free from every other desire. Cf. *Vita Nuova* § 11: "When she appeared in any place, it seemed to me, by the hope of her excellent salutation, that there was no man mine enemy any longer; and such warmth of charity came upon me that most certainly in that moment I would have pardoned whosoever had done me an injury." (ROSSETTI'S translation).

[2] Turn thee and listen, for not only in my eyes is Paradise.

sky. Josue and Judas Machabæus come first, the warriors for the chosen people of God under the old law. Then follow the Christian knights; Charlemagne and Orlando the Paladin; William of Aquitaine and Rainouart, two mediæval French heroes of the ninth century who fought against the Saracens and afterwards became monks, the former being a familiar figure in Italian art as St. William; Godfrey de Bouillon, the deliverer of Jerusalem; and last of all Robert Guiscard, the Norman conqueror of Southern Italy, the Church's most terrible champion in the days of Hildebrand. Then the spirit of the old Crusader flashing upward rejoins his comrades in the Cross and in their song.

Chapter IV.

EMPIRE AND CLOISTER.

I. THE HEAVEN OF JUPITER.

"Justitia potissima est solum sub Monarcha: ergo ad optimam mundi dispositionem requiritur esse Monarchiam sive Imperium..... Auctoritas *temporalis Monarchæ*, sive *Imperatoris*, sine ullo medio, in ipsum de Fonte universalis Auctoritatis descendit."

DANTE, *De Monarchia.*

THE increased loveliness of Beatrice, Dante's own perception that he himself has advanced a step nearer to his God, and the change in colour of the heavens round him from the ruddy glow of Mars to the silvery white of Jove, indicate the ascent to the next heaven. This is the sphere of just rulers, whose spirits appear as golden lights flying and singing like a flock of birds. The intense importance of the transformations which he beholds in this sphere is indicated by an invocation. In the twenty-ninth Canto of the *Purgatorio*, on the approach of that triumphant pageant with the allegorical figure of the Church, Dante had invoked the Virgins sacrosanct and called upon Urania with her choir to lend him aid; so now in this heaven, when about to behold a mystical allegory of the Empire and its divine origin, he again invokes the Muses in analogous terms. It

would seem, too, that in the very words of this invocation the political nature of the allegory is implied, as in the former lines there had been an ecclesiastical suggestion of fasts and vigils.

O diva Pegasea, che gl'ingegni
Fai gloriosi, e rendigli longevi,
Ed essi teco le cittadi e i regni,
Illustrami di te, sì ch'io rilevi
Le lor figure com' io l'ho concette;
Paia tua possa in questi versi brevi.
Par. xviii. 82.[1]

For the poet's theme is Justice in its relations to the Empire and the divine origin of that universal Roman Monarchy, of which the knowledge is "Among truths ill understood

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[1] O divine Pegasea, thou who genius
Dost glorious make, and render it long-lived,
And this through thee the cities and the kingdoms,
Illume me with thyself, that I may bring
Their figures out as I have them conceived!
Apparent be thy power in these brief verses!
LONGFELLOW.

Cf. the analogous passage in *Purg.* xxix. 37.

O sacrosante Vergini, se fami
Freddi o vigilie mai per voi soffersi,
Cagion mi sprona ch'io mercè ne chiami.
Or convien ch'Elicona per me versi,
Ed Urania m'aiuti col suo coro,
Forti cose a pensar mettere in versi.

O Virgins sacrosanct! if ever hunger,
Vigils or cold for you I have endured,
The occasion spurs me their reward to claim!
Now Helicon must needs pour forth for me,
And with her choir Urania must assist me,
To put in verse things difficult to think.
LONGFELLOW.

yet profitable at once the most profitable and the most obscure." Letter by letter, pausing after each to enable Dante to perfectly take in their meaning, these spirits form to his eyes the text, *Diligite justitiam qui judicatis terram*, "Love justice ye who judge the earth", traced letter by letter successively in burning gold against the silvery white background of the planet. When the *M* of *terram* has been formed, they rest; so that a great golden *M* stands described within the silver background of Jove, the *M* being the initial letter of *Monarchia* or Monarchy, which with Dante is synonymous with the Empire. This then is the first lesson of this heaven, for Dante himself says in the *De Monarchia*, "The world is ordered best when Justice is paramount therein .... But Justice is paramount only in a monarchy and therefore a monarchy, that is, the Empire, is needed if the world is to be ordered for the best." So too, in line 71, he says that these letters were signed by the sparkling of the love of the heaven, *Lo sfavillar dell'amor che lì era;* and in the *De Monarchia* we read, "It is evidently necessary for the welfare of the world for there to be a monarchy or single Princedom which men call the Empire. And this thought did Boethius breathe when he said, 'O happy race of men if your hearts are ruled by the love which rules the heaven'."[1]

We have seen that in the *De Monarchia* Dante solved these three questions concerning the Empire: is it necessary for the welfare of the world, did the Roman People take to itself by right this office, does the authority of monarchy or empire come directly from God? Just as, besides the direct answer in the *De Monarchia*, Dante answered the second question in a poetical way in the sixth Canto of

[1] The quotations from the *De Monarchia* are from F. C. CHURCH'S translation.

Paradise, so here, in the first lesson of this sphere, he has indirectly answered the first question again: The Monarchy is necessary for the welfare of the world. So now in a second lesson, while drawing a moral for the Guelphic powers who oppose the Lily to the sacrosanct emblem of the Empire, he would emphatically, though not directly, answer the third question, and declare that the authority of the Roman Empire comes directly from God.

Other spirits descend upon the summit of the *M* and rest there singing. Then, in accordance with the divine disposition—

Sì come il Sol, che l' accende, sortille,[1]

rising to various heights, those higher (probably those who have attained a more perfect degree of beatitude) form the head and neck of an eagle, while those below at first form a lily upon the *M.* The Justice that those who judge the earth must love can, in Dante's conception, only be found under the sway of the ideal Roman Empire of the *De Monarchia*, and only flourish beneath the protecting wings of the Imperial Eagle. So the lower spirits, that first formed the Lily, now follow the higher spirits in forming one complete body of the sacred Bird, one perfect Eagle. It is clearly an allegory of how the Guelphic powers must submit to the Empire and form peacefully an integral part in this complete universal Monarchy—

Quietata ciascuna in suo loco.[2]

And in this they followed the imprint of God's hand:—

Con poco moto seguitò la imprenta. [3]

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[1] Even as the sun that lights them had allotted. *Par.* xviii. 105.

[2] Each one being quiet in its place. xviii. 106.

[3] With a slight motion followed the imprint. xviii. 114.

That this form of government is ordained by God, that it comes directly from Him and is the only one beneath which justice is possible, is clearly indicated:—

> Quei che dipinge lì non ha chi il guidi:
> Ma esso guida; e da lui si rammenta.
> Quella virtù ch'è forma per li nidi.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> O dolce stella, quali e quante gemme
> Mi dimostraron che nostra giustizia
> Effetto sia del ciel che tu ingemme![1]

The great doctrine of the *De Monarchia* is implied throughout: "It is therefore clear that the authority of temporal monarchy comes down, with no intermediate will, from the fountain of universal authority; and this fountain, one in its unity, flows through many channels out of the abundance of the goodness of God." But on earth the rays of justice that proceed from the Divine Mind are obscured by the smoke of ecclesiastical corruption, which leads the Church to oppose the imperial authority. So, from the spectacle of the Eagle, Dante turns to an animated invective against those ecclesiastics who, by their simony, traffic in sacred things and lead men astray by their evil example. He especially bitterly blames the frequent excommunications as party weapons, and ends the eighteenth Canto in a sudden tremendous burst of satire, apparently addressed not to

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[1] He who there paints has none to be his guide
But Himself guides; and is from Him remembered
That virtue which is form unto the nest.

. . . . . .

O gentle star! what and how many gems
Did demonstrate to me, that all our justice
Effect is of that heaven which thou ingemmest.

LONGFELLOW.

Boniface VIII or Clement V, but to Pope John XXII, the reigning pontiff at the time when he was writing:—

Ma tu, che sol per cancellare scrivi,
Pensa che Pietro e Paolo, che moriro
Per la vigna che guasti, ancor son vivi.
Ben puoi tu dire: Io ho fermo il disiro
Sì a colui che volle viver solo
E che per salti fu tratto al martiro,
Ch'io non conosco il Pescator nè Polo.

Par. xviii. 130.[1]

This image of the Eagle, the standard and emblem of the divinely instituted universal Monarchy, has thus appeared

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[1] Yet thou, who writest but to cancel, think
That Peter and that Paul, who for this vineyard
Which thou art spoiling died, are still alive!
Well canst thou say: 'So steadfast my desire
Is unto him who willed to live alone,
And for a dance was led to martyrdom,
That I know not the Fisherman nor Paul'.

LONGFELLOW.

His Holiness is of course showing his devotion to St. John by collecting his images upon the golden coins of Florence, and so has no leisure to even remember the Apostles. One or two of the early commentators piously pretend not to see the joke! Cf. *Paradiso* ix. 127. etc. John XXII was supposed to be massing up a vast treasure in Avignon. The Florentine florin bore the Baptist on one side and the Lily on the other; in 1322 the Pope raised a storm of indignation by himself coining florins like those of Florence, but marked with his own initials and papal mitre on the side of St. John and the monogram of the Apostles by the Lily. When some Italian nobles imitated his example, in 1324, John promptly excommunicated them for their trouble (Villani, Book V)! However, Dr. Pastor well points out the injustice of condemning these Avignon pontiffs merely upon the grounds of their financial and political policy, and leaving out of sight their grand efforts for the propagation of Christianity in the East.

completed in the sphere of Jove. It is a sign to Dante of God's will concerning Temporal Monarchy, for he tells us in the *De Monarchia* that the will of God must be sought by signs, even as the human will, except to the person who wills, can only be gathered from signs; the will of God is like an invisible seal which has left its manifest impression upon visible things as upon wax. This blessed sign was woven of praise of the Divine grace; and the perfect unity and concord of the spirits that compose it, the "perpetual flowers of eternal joy," is vividly expressed. They speak with one single voice of their beatitude, as though it were the beak of the Eagle that spoke, and of their memory which men on earth honour, but do not imitate; one sound of many loves, as one heat from many burning coals in the fire of celestial charity, and one indistinguishable odour from many flowers. We are reminded of the description in the *Purgatorio* of the mingled sweetness of a thousand odours that rose from the Valley of the Princes. These are the souls of just and faithful rulers, now in Paradise united with the celestial Dominations, that angelic order which is "an express image of the true and archetypal dominion in God", to influence the rulers of the earth to love justice and to imitate the dominion in God by submission to the Empire. The *giusto* and *pio* of their song refers to the judgment and justice which must be the pre-eminent attributes of the monarch, and which David prayed for from God when he said: "Give to the king thy judgment, O God: and to the king's son thy justice." Their perfect unity and concord represent the perfect unity and concord which must exist on earth, between the constituent rulers and states of the Empire. "Concord is the uniform motion of many wills," says the *De Monarchia,* "and all concord depends on unity which is in wills. Therefore there must be one will to be the single mistress and regulating influence

of all the rest." This sovereign will is indicated in the single sound of the Eagle, issuing from many loves.

Human justice and human laws being modelled upon the Divine Justice and the Divine Laws, Dante is eager to have an old question solved touching Divine Justice, which the Eagle knows without his expressing it. The Eagle does not at once mention Dante's special point, but enters upon a profound discourse on the Divine Justice in general, for, in that boundless and unfathomable ocean, Dante's difficulty is a mere trifling drop to be swallowed up and overwhelmed. And it first touches upon the creation of the Universe, for according to scholastic philosophy the order of the Universe shows the justice of God, as the order of any multitude shows the justice of its ruler. This, therefore, is indicated in the opening lines of the Eagle's discourse, and we may remember in illustration Blake's noble design of the Ancient of Days setting a compass to the earth:—

Colui che volse il sesto
Allo stremo del mondo, e dentro ad esso
Distinse tanto occulto e manifesto,
Non poteo suo valor sì fare impresso
In tutto l'universo, che il suo verbo
Non rimanesse in infinito eccesso.

Par. xix. 40.[1]

Since in the Word, or Divine Wisdom, is the archetypal idea of all things possible, therefore, however vast creation may be, and whatever perfection created beings may attain

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[1] He who a compass turned
On the world's outer verge, and who within it
Devised so much occult and manifest,
Could not the impress of his power so make
On all the universe, as that his Word
Should not remain in infinite excess.

LONGFELLOW.

to, still the Word must remain in infinite excess to what is actually created, and infinitely above every created intelligence, however perfect (Cornoldi). Lucifer himself had need of light; much more then must every lesser nature be too small a vessel to receive the fulness of God's infinite light and love. Hence Dante's question is already answered before it is stated: human intellect can enter just so much into the Divine Justice, as our eyes can penetrate into the depths of the sea:—

Dunque vostra veduta che conviene
Essere alcun dei raggi della mente
Di che tutte le cose son ripiene,
Non può da sua natura esser possente
Tanto che suo principio non discerna
Molto di là, da quel che l'è parvente.
Però nella giustizia sempiterna
La vista che riceve il vostro mondo,
Com'occhio per lo mar, entro s'interna;
Che, benchè dalla proda veggia il fondo,
In pelago nol vede; e nondimeno
È lì, ma cela lui l'esser profondo.

Par. xix. 52.[1]

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[1] In consequence *our* vision, which perforce
Must be some ray of that intelligence
With which all things whatever are replete,
Cannot in its own nature be so potent,
That it shall not its origin discern
Far beyond that which is apparent to it.
Therefore into the justice sempiternal
The power of vision that your world receives,
As eye into the ocean, penetrates;
Which though it see the bottom near the shore,
Upon the deep perceives it not; and yet
'Tis there, but it is hidden by the depth.

LONGFELLOW.

The reading *vostra veduta*, "your vision", seems preferable to the one followed by Longfellow (*nostra*). Also lines 56—57, *che suo*

Thus all light comes from God; and Dante's query as to the justice of the fate of the just heathen, who dies unbaptized, proceeds from insufficiency of human intellect. The Eagle rebukes the presumption of such questions: who art thou that wouldst judge from a thousand miles away with the short sight of one span? The Divine Will is immutable, always essentially just, and only what corresponds to it is just:—

Cotanto è giusto, quanto a lei consuona;

"So much is just as is accordant with it." In the *De Monarchia* Dante uses a somewhat similar argument in support of the divinely ordained supremacy of the Roman Empire: "Whatever does not agree with the Divine Will cannot be right, and whatever does agree with the Divine Will is Right itself." The final point in the lesson is given by the Eagle wheeling round with a mysterious song that passes Dante's understanding: "As incomprehensible as my song to thee, so is the eternal judgment to you mortals."

Dante's difficulty is practically solved in the following Canto, but, indirectly, it is answered now as well. Although faith in Christ is necessary, yet many who in speech are most aggressively Christian will be found among the reprobate, and those that knew not Christ among the elect. It is here that Dante first absolutely states that it is the Roman Eagle that the blessed spirits of this sphere are forming, *Il segno che fe' i Romani al mondo reverendi;* [1] and it is to prelude and justify the Eagle's denunciation of the contemporary sovereigns. Dante's method is characteristic of

principio non discerna molto di là da quel che l'è parvente, or *di là, da quel ch'egli è, parvente*, mean that God is infinitely more than the finite image of Himself presented to us by His visible creation.

[1] The standard
That made the Romans reverend to the world.

him; Faith will not avail without good works, so let all these persons look to it! When the book shall be opened in the presence of the Throne and the dead be judged, the very Persians will condemn these kings. Dante remembers the injunction of Cacciaguida, fearlessly to assail those in the highest places; so he summons before his poetical tribunal all the rulers of Christendom from the Emperor elect to the king of Cyprus, and through the mouth of the Eagle condemns them all. In that eternal volume will be recorded their shameful lives and abominable deeds, some of which Dante himself indicates and others leaves till then; perhaps he did not himself quite know for what special wickedness the king of Norway, for instance, was distinguished, but had no doubt that he was like the rest, and that it would all be finally revealed. His sometimes exaggerated worship of the Empire did not prevent the Florentine republican from judging sternly the actual individual sovereigns, and even the Emperor himself. Dante's attitude is that of Solomon, "Unto you therefore, O kings, do I speak that ye may learn wisdom and not fall from it." In the *Convito*, Book IV, he bids them unite the philosophical with the imperial authority to rule well and perfectly, and adds in the same spirit as in this Canto: "O miserable ones who rule at present! and O most miserable ones who are ruled! who join no philosophical authority to your government, neither by your own study nor by counsel, so that to all may be addressed the words of Ecclesiastes, 'Woe to thee, O land, where thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning!' and to no land can be addressed that which follows: 'Blessed art thou, O land, where thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength and not for drunkenness!'"[1]

[1] The splendid denunciation of the kings of the earth with which

As after sunset the stars appear, so now, when the Eagle becomes silent, the voices are heard of the blessed spirits composing that sacred and imperial sign (Canto xx.): the beak is silent while the individual spirits, growing more bright, break out each into its special song of divine love. As the stars in Dante's view receive their light from the sun, so is the power of kings and princes derived from the Emperor as from their fount. This is indicated by analogy in the line—

Per molte luci in che una risplende.

In the silence of the Eagle for the individual voices of its constituent spirits to be heard, an allusion may be traced to the teaching of the *De Monarchia* i. 14. upon the liberty of the individual states composing the Empire:—

"It must be carefully observed that, when we say that mankind may be ruled by one supreme prince, we do not mean that the most trifling judgments for each particular town are to proceed immediately from him. For nations

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Dante closes the nineteenth Canto is in reality a glorification of a kind of political *sirventese*, employed by the Povençal troubadours. The most famous specimen of the kind is Sordello's Lament for Blacatz, in which, on the death of that gallant warrior, he summons various sovereigns to partake of his heart to restore their courage, and rebukes them all for their failings, commencing with the Emperor Frederick II. It was probably this poem that made Dante assign to Sordello in the *Purgatorio* the place he holds there, to pass judgment upon the same princes, or their heirs or descendants, whom he had rebuked during life. The influence of this poem of Sordello's is clearly visible in this Canto, *Paradiso* xix., and in *Purgatorio* vii., and there is even a reminiscence of it in the first sonnet of the *Vita Nuova*. See *Vita e Poesie di Sordello di Goito per Cesare de Lollis*. (Halle, 1896).

[1] By many lights wherein is one resplendent.

Par. xx. 6.

and kingdoms and states have each of them certain peculiarities which must be regulated by different laws. For law is the rule which directs life .... But our meaning is that it is in those matters which are common to all men, that men should be ruled by one Monarch, and be governed by a rule common to them all with a view to their peace. And the individual princes must receive this rule of life or law from him."

When the single spirits are silent, the voice of the Eagle speaks again, to set forth the example of just and righteous kings of old and their reward, in contrast to the modern tyrants whom it has just rebuked, and to further illustrate the difficult matter of Dante's query. The poet's eagerness on the subject is vividly expressed in his description of the Eagle's speech:—

> Parole
> Quali aspettava il cuore, ov'io le scrissi;

and indeed it is clear that Dante's worship of the great names of antiquity might well cause his anxiety to be no mere poetic fiction. The Eagle therefore makes known the six highest spirits of the heaven of Jove, who form its eye. It will be noticed that Dante is apparently viewing the Eagle with its head turned to one side. Of these six spirits, two are rulers of God's chosen people of old, and two of His divinely instituted universal Empire; one is a solitary type of a just modern king; and one a just man from the ancestral nation of Rome. To each is given an appropriate terzina as a motto. David, the singer of

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[1] Words such as the heart awaited in which I wrote them.
Par. xx. 29.

the Holy Spirit, is the pupil of the eye, clearly the supreme spirit of this sphere, as Solomon was of the heaven of the Sun. Trajan, Hezekiah and Constantine form the upper arc of the eyebrow. The act of justice of Trajan, when he consoled the widow for her son, was one of the examples of humility that Dante had seen sculptured on the wall in the first terrace of Purgatory; it was a not unfrequent subject for representation in Early Italian Art, and there is an interesting example in the National Gallery from the hand of some early Veronese painter. He had learnt how dearly it costs not following Christ by experience of both heaven and hell, which, being in direct opposition to the passage where the Eagle had declared that no one attained ever to heaven without faith in Christ, produces a difficulty to be presently solved. Likewise the terzina assigned to Hezekiah, who postponed death by sincere penitence, involves a question full of difficulty not only for the mediæval mind:—

> Ora conosce che il giudizio eterno
> Non si trasmuta, quando degno preco
> Fa crastino laggiù dell'odierno.
>
> *Par.* xx. 52.[1]

St. Thomas reconciles the immutability of God's decrees with the efficacy of prayer by teaching that we do not pray to alter the divine plan, but to obtain what God has arranged to be fulfilled by prayers: "Men need to do sundry things, not that by their acts they may alter the divine plan, but that by their acts they may fulfil certain effects according to the order arranged by God."[2] Con-

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[1] Now knoweth he that the eternal judgment
Suffers no change, albeit worthy prayer
Maketh below to-morrow of to-day.
LONGFELLOW.

[2] *Summa* I—2 q. 83. a. 2.

stantine likewise illustrates the teachings of Aquinas as to good intentions: a certain familiar proverb would hardly find favour in Dante's eyes. Constantine with the laws and the Eagle became Greek, to yield Rome to the Pope, *sotto buona intenzion che fe' mal frutto*,[1] or, as Dante has elsewhere written of the Eagle's action in lining the chariot with its feathers, *Forse con intenzion sana e benigna.*[2]

> Ora conosce come il mal, dedutto
> Dal suo bene operar, non gli è nocivo,
> Avvegna che sia il mondo indi distrutto.
> *Par.* xx. 58.[3]

The sequent event does not make an act evil which was good, nor an act good which was evil. The effect consequent upon an action—as here the breach between the Papacy and the Empire, and the resulting ruin of Italy—does not affect the morality of the action, unless chosen as a means or intended as an end or annexed as a relevant circumstance to the means chosen. None of these are here to be laid to Constantine's charge, though in the *De Monarchia* Dante is more forcible: "Oh happy people, oh Italy, how glorious hadst thou been, if either he that weakener of thine Empire had never been born, or if his own pious intention had never deceived him." In the same place the poet declares that, had Constantine alienated the dignities of the Empire, he would have rent the seamless coat which even they who pierced our Lord's side with a spear did not dare to divide.

First in the lower arc is the spirit of William II, the

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[1] Under the good intent that bore bad fruit. *Par.* xx. 56.

[2] Perhaps with good intention and benign. *Purg.* xxxii. 138.

[3] Now knoweth he how all the ill deduced
From his good action is not harmful to him,
Although the world thereby may be destroyed.

last of the great Norman kings of the two Sicilies, the nephew of Constance to whom he bequeathed his dominions and so opened the way for the long and deadly struggle between the houses of Hohenstauffen and Anjou; "he for whom that land mourns which now weeps for the living Charles and Frederick; now he knows how heaven loves a just king." Aquinas (in *De Regim. Princip.* quoted in Hettinger) says: "The eternal reward that God will bestow upon his earthly representatives is the supreme and ultimate motive which impels the monarch to be just. But since a pre-eminent degree of virtue is requisite in order that he may govern justly, that is, without respect to any personal advantages, therefore a just prince merits a far higher reward than others." Dante has a high conception of the virtues of these mighty Normans both in war and peace—Constance, Robert Guiscard, and William: noble women, heroic warriors, just rulers—such is the poet's judgment upon the house of Hauteville. Possibly he was influenced by the fact that their race was already a thing of the past, as well as by his divided feeling towards the house of the Hohenstauffen and his hatred of the house of Anjou. And now that their fair heritage had been rent in twain between Anjou and Arragon, in spite of his respectful treatment of the founders of the two dynasties, Charles the elder and Peter, in the valley of the Princes (*Purg.* ix.), both Arragonese and Angevin in his sight are usurpers and tyrants. To Charles, the Angevin king of Apulia, and Frederick, the Arragonese sovereign of Sicily, Dante cries in the *Convito:* "Look to your safety, ye foes of God, who have seized the sceptres of the kingdoms of Italy." The death of William II initiated for Naples and Sicily the long series of changing dynasties, each eclipsing its predecessor in misrule, and all practically (as Balbo observes) remaining as foreign rulers without becoming really Italian. Dante's

view of the two Sicilies and their rulers, French and Spanish alike, seems to be not only historically true but even prophetical.

Last of the six most illustrious spirits of the Eagle is Rhipeus the Trojan, raised from the mists of paganism to rejoice in the Beatific Vision, and to penetrate into the infinite mysteries of divine grace as deeply as a finite intellect may.

Just as Dante preluded the Eagle's rebuke of unjust kings with a reference to the divinely ordained sway of the Roman Empire, so he concludes the Eagle's panegyric of righteous rulers with another indication that this Eagle, that passes judgment upon kings and princes, is indeed the emblem of that form of government which is according to God's will. He leads up to it with the exquisite lines on the lark:—

Quale allodetta che in aere si spazia
Prima cantando, e poi tace, contenta
Dell' ultima dolcezza che la sazia,
Tal mi sembiò l'imago della imprenta
Dell' eterno piacere, al cui disio
Ciascuna cosa, quale ell'è, diventa.
Par. xx. 73.[1]

that is, the Roman Empire, of which the Eagle is the emblem, is the imprint of God's will and an unfolding upon earth of the likeness of the Eternal Goodness: "What God wills to see in mankind is to be held as real and true Right."

The Eagle proceeds to enlighten Dante's wonder at seeing

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[1] Like as a lark that in the air expatiates,
First singing and then silent with content
Of the last sweetness that doth satisfy her,
Such seemed to me the image of the imprint
Of the eternal pleasure, by whose will
Doth everything become the thing it is.
LONGFELLOW.

these two pagans, Trajan and Rhipeus, adorning the *region degli angeli*. It first commends the poet's faith in believing all that it has told him concerning the necessity of Faith and the salvation of these two spirits, without understanding how the contradiction can be explained; not believing because he has seen or understood, but crediting things that he does not see, in order that he may understand; then it makes clear the difficulty:—

> Regnum cælorum violenza pate
> Da caldo amore e da viva speranza
> Che vince la divina volontate.
> Non a guisa che l'uomo all' uom sovranza,
> Ma vince lei perchè vuole esser vinta;
> E vinta, vince con sua beninanza.
>
> *Par.* xx. 94.[1]

By an application of this principle, both Trajan and Rhipeus died with faith in the Redeemer. In the case of Trajan, the vivid hope of St. Gregory, and then the true love of the Emperor himself, gained him Paradise; by vivid hope based upon the power of prayer, Gregory obtained from God that Trajan should return from Hell to life so that his will might be moved to good (for free will in the lost is obstinate in evil), and in a short second life he believed and loved much, and so on his second death had earned the bliss of Paradise. Dante refers to this *gran vittoria* of Gregory in *Purgatorio* x. This most amazing legend

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[1] *Regnum cælorum* suffereth violence
From fervent love and from that living hope
That overcometh the Divine volition.
Not in the guise that man o'ercometh man,
But conquers it because it will be conquered
And conquered conquers by benignity.
LONGFELLOW.

was gravely discussed by mediæval theologians, even by St. Thomas himself in the *Summa*, and various explanations were given; some supposed that it was only a temporary respite accorded to Trajan until the day of judgment, and others, like Aquinas and Dante, that, after his soul's reunion with its body, he was baptized and did penance on earth and then went to Paradise. Even as late as Bellarmine's time the matter was thought worthy of discussion, but Bellarmine prudently adds (quoted in Hettinger): "But as Trajan's resurrection was witnessed by no one, and as the fact is not recorded by any ancient author, I prefer the view that the story is fictitious!"

The case of Rhipeus is distinctly more interesting. Benvenuto da Imola remarks that it is a complete answer to Dante's question in the nineteenth Canto, concerning the fate of the man born on the banks of the Indus:—

Chè tu dicevi: Un uom nasce alla riva
Dell'Indo, e quivi non è chi ragioni
Di Cristo, nè chi legga, nè chi scriva;
E tutti i suoi voleri ed atti buoni
Sono, quanto ragione umana vede,
Senza peccato in vita od in sermoni.
Muore non battèzzato e senza fede;
Ov'è questa giustizia che il condanna?
Ov'è la colpa sua, se ei non crede?

Par. xix. 70.[1]

[1] For saidst thou: 'Born a man is on the shore
Of Indus, and is none who there can speak
Of Christ, nor who can read, nor who can write;
And all his inclinations and his actions
Are good, so far as human reason sees,
Without a sin in life or in discourse:
He dieth unbaptized and without faith;
Where is this justice that condemneth him?
Where is his fault, if he do not believe?'

LONGFELLOW.

"So now," says our good Benvenuto, "our author fitly introduces a pagan infidel in the person of Rhipeus, of whose salvation there would seem the very slightest chance of all; by reason of the time, so many centuries before the advent of Christ; by reason of the place, for he was of Troy where exceeding pride was then paramount; by reason of the sect, for he was a pagan and gentile, not a Jew. Briefly then, our author wishes us to gather from this fiction this conclusion—that even such a pagan, of whose salvation no one hoped, is capable of salvation;" or, as Dr. Scartazzini puts it, to show how the divine grace revealed the future redemption to virtuous pagans also. Dante's main object, however, is clearly to indicate that the race whom he regards as the ancestors of the Roman People were not without divine light. Rhipeus is only mentioned three times in the second book of the *Æneid*. On the night of the fall of Troy he is recorded as one of the band of warriors that gather round Æneas in the moonlight, and again as arraying himself with the rest in the arms taken from the Greeks and so mingling with them. And then at last, when they strive to rescue Cassandra, and their disguise is perceived by the Greeks, they are overwhelmed by numbers, and amongst the others Rhipeus falls near the altar of Minerva: "Rhipeus also falls, who was above all others the most just among the Trojans and the strictest observer of right"—

> Cadit et Rhipeus, justissimus unus
> Qui fuit in Teucris et servantissimus æqui.

Dante, as it were, weaves in this description that Virgil gives of the Trojan's character with the text in *Acts* x: "In every nation he that feareth Him and worketh justice is acceptable to God"—*In omni gente qui timet eum et operatur justitiam acceptus est illi;* and thus completes his

conception of Rhipeus the Trojan, preacher of truth: this righteousness of which Virgil speaks was a gift of grace, and in reward of his love for righteousness he was enlightened with more grace, laboured against paganism, and had the theological virtues infused into him.

L'altra, per grazia che da sì profonda
Fontana stilla, che mai creatura
Non pinse l'occhio infino alla prim'onda,
Tutto suo amor laggiù pose a drittura;
Per che, di grazia in grazia, Dio gli aperse
L'occhio alla nostra redenzion futura:
Ond'ei credette in quella, e non sofferse
Da indi il puzzo più del paganesmo,
E riprendiene le genti perverse.
Quelle tre donne gli fûr per battesmo,
Che tu vedesti dalla destra ruota,
Dinanzi al battezzar più d'un millesmo.

Par. xx. 118.[1]

Dante in his treatment of virtuous heathens follows the teaching of St. Thomas as to the two ways in which they may be saved; God will make known to such a one the necessary truths of faith, either through interior illumination or by the voice of a preacher: "Anyone can prepare

[1] The other one, through grace, that from so deep
A fountain wells that never hath the eye
Of any creature reached its primal wave,
Set all his love below on righteousness;
Wherefore from grace to grace did God unclose
His eye to our redemption yet to be:
Whence he believed therein, and suffered not
From that day forth the stench of Paganism,
And he reproved therefore the folk perverse.
Those Maidens three, whom at the right-hand wheel
Thou didst behold, were unto him for baptism
More than a thousand years before baptizing.

LONGFELLOW.

himself for having faith through what is in natural reason; whence it is said that, if anyone who is born in barbarous nations does what lieth in him, God will reveal to him what is necessary for salvation, either by internal inspiration or by sending a teacher (*vel inspirando vel doctorem mittendo*)." The way of interior illumination is seen in Rhipeus, whilst that of sending a teacher was illustrated by the case of Statius in the *Purgatorio*. That of Trajan is of course a special miracle, outside of God's ordinary method of action in these matters, a special concession to the prayers of a saint.

The Eagle concludes by touching somewhat upon the inscrutable mystery of Predestination, and, as St. Thomas had already done in the heaven of the Sun, so here it rebukes rash judgment of mortals in these high matters. Let them rein in their judgments, for even the saints that see God do not see all nor know yet all the elect; and they are contented so. We have again, though here less sweetly and simply uttered, the thought that Piccarda expressed in the heaven of the Moon:—

> Ed ènne dolce così fatto scemo;
> Perchè il ben nostro in questo ben s'affina,
> Che quel che vuole Iddio e noi volemo.
>
> *Par.* xx. 136.[1]

Whilst the Eagle makes clear Dante's short intellectual vision and heals his infirmity of rash judgment, the spirits of these two saints, that have so wondrously been saved, vividly and harmoniously manifest their joy; instead of vibrations of the chords of the lute, they accompany the Eagle's song of their salvation by harmonies of celestial light.

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[1] And sweet to us is such a deprivation,
Because our good in this good is made perfect,
That whatsoe'er God wills, we also will.
LONGFELLOW.

II. THE HEAVEN OF SATURN.

"In summitate hujus scalæ sunt contemplativi, jam quasi in cælo positi, quia cælestia cogitant. Isti sunt Angeli Dei per scalam ascendentes, quia ascendunt per contemplationem ad Deum, et descendunt per compassionem ad proximum. Activa vita innocentia est bonorum operum: contemplativa vita est speculatio supernorum. Activa vita terrenis rebus bene utitur: contemplativa vero, sæculo renuntians, soli Deo vivere delectatur." ST. BERNARD, *De modo bene vivendi.*

BENVENUTO remarks that the glorious spirits of the sphere of Jove are those who merited eternal felicity by the active life, civil and political, and by just administration of the kingdoms and princedoms of the earth; but that now the poet intends to treat of those souls who served God by the life of contemplation, far away from the noise of the world. The active life prepares and disposes a man for the contemplative, and perfection in the life of action must be acquired before man can perfectly attain to the life of contemplation. The just rulers represent the highest grade of the glorified active life. It is for them, and especially for the Emperor the bearer of the Eagle, to aim that life may pass in freedom and peace, "whereby the waves and blandishments of human desires may be set at rest" (*De Monarchia* iii.16); and such conditions are in a sense requisite that learning may be duly applied and contemplation practised. It was fitting, therefore, that the emblem of the Imperial

Dominion should have been seen in the last heaven of the active life, the sphere ruled by the celestial Dominations who are "an express image of the true and archetypal dominion in God". From the Thrones, the mirrors of God's judgments, that represent His steadfastness and rule the sphere of Saturn, the Dominations receive the divine light to enable them to govern with justice, just as the practical intellect must acquire from the speculative the knowledge it needs for action.[1] The supreme tranquillity and serenity indicated by the sitting of God upon the Thrones, points to their sphere as the fitting heaven for the appearance of the contemplative saints, and the intense absorption and steadfastness of contemplation is represented in the opening lines:—

> Già eran gli occhi miei rifissi al volto
> Della mia donna, e l'animo con essi,
> E da ogni altro intento s'era tolto.
>
> *Par.* xxi. 1.[2]

Beatrice does not smile, for now Dante's human intellect would be dazzled by her splendour, and, confounded by excess of glory, would comprehend nothing. At her bidding Dante turns to behold the ladder of translucent gold, which reaches up to the last Heaven of Heavens. The ladder is of gold to denote the perfection of the contemplative life above all others, as gold is the most precious of metals. Its steps represent either the virtues by which contemplative souls mount upwards, or the truths that are mastered one

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[1] Cf. PROF. LUBIN'S Commentary.

[2] Already on my Lady's face mine eyes
Again were fastened, and with these my mind,
And from all other purpose was withdrawn.
LONGFELLOW.

by one in consideration in the ascent to universal truth. Possibly they may refer to the steps of contemplation, according to Richard of St. Victor; the six progressive grades of ascent to God, according to the subject matter of consideration and the way in which the soul apprehends it; until the highest step is reached, which is above reason and beside reason, contemplating the impenetrable mysteries of God which transcend all reason, and attaining to the sublime consideration of divine truth, in which finally contemplation becomes perfect[1]:—

Tanto che nol seguiva la mia luce,

so high that my sight could not follow it. It has been seen already that these are only the final rungs of the ladder that now become visible and signify contemplation. Since the contemplatives, according to St. Bernard, ascend through contemplation to God and descend through compassion to their neighbour, Dante now beholds these spirits coming down the ladder towards him, in appearance as though all the stars in heaven were approaching, and in motion like the rooks flying about their nests at sunrise. Benvenuto greatly admires this simile of the rooks, and seems to see some special analogy between the habits of that species of bird and the customs of contemplative saints. As Dante so frequently compares the souls of his saints, and sometimes the separated spirits of his sinners, to birds, it will be remembered how Shelley has likened a skylark to an *unbodied joy*:—

"Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun."

As one spirit approaches nearer than the others and shows its love by increased brilliancy, Dante desires to question

[1] VAUGHAN, *St. Thomas of Aquin.* Vol. I.

it. It awaits his question, and there seems a pause before Beatrice gives him leave to ask. Usually we have seen the eagerness of the blessed souls to solve Dante's difficulties, before he has even fully formed them to himself, to increase in proportion with their increased perfection of celestial love, as he ascends from heaven to heaven. It has been suggested that the explanation of the peculiar conduct of the spirits in this seventh sphere lies in the idea that one of the good influences of Saturn is to give the dispositions necessary to exercise the virtue of discretion, and so we certainly find that, in the heaven of Saturn, Dante has several checks put upon his impulsiveness and severe limits prescribed to his questions.

Why has this spirit come to satisfy Dante, rather than any other of the blessed of this sphere? Why, too, are the sweet symphonies of Paradise silent only in this heaven? The saint answers the second question first: the silence is from celestial charity and consideration for Dante's weak mortal power. This, of course, is another way of expressing the still higher degree of bliss represented by this seventh Heaven over the other spheres of the planets. Perhaps also in the silence of the celestial music, the cessation of all such appeal to the sense of hearing, there may be a reference to the higher degrees of contemplation in the teaching of Richard of St. Victor, in which "the imagination is dropped and the spiritual element alone is the object of thought." In partial answer to the first question, the spirit humbly disclaims any excess of love over that of the other spirits of his heaven. He has merely come to greet the poet in celestial charity in accordance with the divine will. Although eager servants to the divine government, yet free will still exists even among the blessed of Paradise: Dante learns—

Come libero amore in questa corte
Basta a seguir la provvidenza eterna.[1]

Men on earth are forced to do God's will by His laws with their sanction of reward or punishment, but the blessed in Paradise have obtained their last end and can now be moved by love alone.[2]

But why has this saint in particular among his companions been predestinated to this office of Dante's instructor? For the poet has not yet sufficiently taken to heart the lesson of the last heaven, that it is vain for mortal minds to peer into mysteries involving Divine Predestination. The spirit in answer first touches upon the wondrous way in which they have their knowledge imparted to them in Paradise; and even that does not suffice to make a full reply to such a question. With them it is not a matter of mere intellectual vision, however sublimely exalted we may suppose that to be in their celestial country; but divine light comes to them from the Divine Essence and, by virtue of that divine light conjoined with the intellectual power of his soul, the saint sees that Divine Essence wherein consists his beatitude, and the brightness of the spirits of the blessed corresponds to their sight of God. And thence follows a final rebuke to Dante and to men on earth, for their presumption in striving to comprehend mysteries of Predestination which not even the brightest saint or the sublimest Seraphim can penetrate:—

Ma quell'alma nel ciel che più si schiara,
Quel Serafin che in Dio più l'occhio ha fisso,
Alla domanda tua non soddisfàra;

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[1] How love unfettered in this court sufficeth
To follow the eternal Providence.

[2] CORNOLDI'S Commentary.

Però che sì s'inoltra nell'abisso
Dell'eterno statuto quel che chiedi,
Che da ogni creata vista è scisso.
Ed al mondo mortal, quando tu riedi,
Questa rapporta, sì che non presuma
A tanto segno più muover li piedi.
La mente che qui luce, in terra fuma;
Onde riguarda come può laggiùe
Quel che non puote, perchè il ciel l'assuma.

Par. xxi. 91.[1]

In answer to a humbler question on the part of the poet, St. Peter Damian reveals his identity, describes briefly but vividly the convent of Santa Croce di Fonte Avellana among the Apennines, and his own austere life of contemplation there in God's service; and laments how (like everything else in Dante's opinion) that cloister has degenerated since those days of fervour and simplicity. It is possible that Dante's own most noble letter to the Italian Cardinals was written from this same convent,[2] and the mention of the place seems now to give rise to analogous thoughts. From his promotion to the cardinalate Peter Damian passes on to a bitter

[1] But that soul in the heaven which is most pure,
That seraph which his eye on God most fixes,
Could this demand of thine not satisfy;
Because so deeply sinks in the abyss
Of the eternal statute what thou askest,
From all created sight it is cut off.
And to the mortal world, when thou returnest,
This carry back, that it may not presume
Longer tow'rd such a goal to move its feet.
The mind, that shineth here, on earth doth smoke;
From this observe how can it do below
That which it cannot though the heaven assume it?

LONGFELLOW.

[2] See Chapter VII for this, and for Benvenuto's remark upon this episode.

satire against the cardinals and great prelates. "All of you have taken covetousness to wife, the mother of impiety and iniquity:" so Dante exclaims in the letter; nor is his saint now more lenient towards the backslidings of those who wore that hat, *che pur di male in peggio si travasa.*[1] The poverty and humility of St. Peter and St. Paul are contrasted with the luxurious lives and worldly pomp of the modern pastors, and a terrible cry like thunder bursts from all the contemplative saints of the sphere, threatening the vengeance of God upon these unworthy and vicious shepherds.

Dante is overwhelmed with terror, until Beatrice reassures him, and explains the cry as coming only from the good zeal of these saints. If their cry so startles thee, much less couldst thou have endured the singing and my smile; that is, in the allegorical sense, if so simple a matter as ecclesiastical corruption and the stern words that holy writers have uttered against it disturbs thy faith, thou couldst not have investigated the lofty mysteries of the higher grades of contemplation without falling into graver doubts and more grievous difficulties:—

Come t'avrebbe trasmutato il canto,
Ed io ridendo, mo pensar lo puoi,
Poscia che il grido t'ha mosso cotanto;
Nel qual, se inteso avessi i prieghi suoi,
Già ti sarebbe nota la vendetta,
La qual vedrai innanzi che tu muoi.
La spada di quassù non taglia in fretta
Nè tardi, ma'che al parer di colui
Che disiando o temendo l'aspetta.
Par. xxii. 10.[2]

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[1] Which shifteth evermore from bad to worse.

[2] "After what wise the singing would have changed thee
And I by smiling, thou canst now imagine,
Since that the cry has startled thee so much,

From the mysterious way in which the divine vengeance is prophesied that Dante is to see overtake the offenders, it would seem probable that he is not alluding to any events that had already happened while he was writing (such as the death of Boniface VIII), but to future contingencies that the poet still hoped for—perhaps the coming of the Veltro among them. Dante was clearly in the position of one to whom the sword of Heaven seemed tardy, for he at least was still awaiting it desirously. But Beatrice bids him turn now from this matter to behold the illustrious spirits of this sphere; that is, turn from the spectacle of the corrupt lives of these prelates with their pomp and luxury, to consider the noble example of the austere and simple lives of the contemplative saints of old, the monks of the west and the hermits of the deserts.

Dante has already so well learned the lesson of discretion, that minor but still essential virtue which is a part of Saturn's benignant influence, that he now hesitates to speak to the spirits before him, until the most glorious of these shining pearls of Paradise, St. Benedict, reassures him. Dante's study of St. Benedict is clearly founded upon the *Dialogues* of St. Gregory, whose life of St. Benedict is one of those quaintly devout, yet priceless mediæval biographies to fitly match with St. Bonaventura's picture of St. Francis: "There was a man of venerable life, blessed by grace, and blessed in name—for he was called Benedictus." The words in which St. Benedict speaks to Dante of his own life and

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In which if thou hadst understood its prayers
Already would be known to thee the vengeance
Which thou shalt look upon before thou diest.
The sword above here smiteth not in haste
Nor tardily, howe'er it seem to him
Who fearing or desiring waits for it."

LONGFELLOW.

work are merely a poetical rendering of a passage in the *Dialogues*:—

> Quel monte, a cui Cassino è nella costa,
> Fu frequentato già in su la cima
> Dalla gente ingannata e mal disposta.
> E quel son io che su vi portai prima
> Lo nome di Colui, che in terra addusse
> La verità che tanto ci sublima.
> E tanta grazia sovra me rilusse,
> Ch'io ritrassi le ville circostanti
> Dall'empio culto che il mondo sedusse.
>
> *Par.* xxii. 37.[1]

Behind him in the planet are the spirits of other men of contemplation, who were "inflamed with that heat which brings forth flowers and holy fruits"—the heat of divine love, the flowers of holy desires and thoughts, the fruits of great deeds; and the monks who followed St. Benedict's own rule strictly and faithfully, "who within the cloisters kept their feet firm and held their hearts steadfast"—the firm feet of well-directed affections and the steadfast heart of perseverance, thus following the angelic Thrones of the sphere of Saturn who imitate the steadfastness of God. Of the two contemplative spirits specially named, Maccarius and Romuald, the former, a Roman noble who became an

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[1] That mountain on whose slope Cassino stands
Was frequented of old upon its summit
By a deluded folk and ill-disposed;
And I am he who first up thither bore
The name of Him who brought upon the earth
The truth that so much sublimateth us.
And such abundant grace upon me shone
That all the neighbouring towns I drew away
From the impious worship that seduced the world.

LONGFELLOW.

anchorite of the desert, is the hero of one of the most amazing legends in that fascinating mediæval book of devout fairy tales, Cavalca's *Vite de' Santi Padri;* the latter was a nobleman of Ravenna who, in penance for his father's slaying a man in a duel, became a Benedictine and founded a stricter branch of the order, the Camaldolese. To this order belonged Don Lorenzo or Lorenzo Monaco, the famous artist who was perhaps the master of the still more famous Dominican, Fra Angelico; and it is curious to observe that two of the greatest luminaries of the Dominican order indirectly owed some of their first training to the Benedictines, for St. Thomas Aquinas was educated in boyhood at Monte Cassino. It seems indeed as the founder of Monte Cassino that St. Benedict chiefly wishes Dante to know him; he tells him of no other episode in his life. In Dante's answer, the impetuous love with which he addresses the saint is most striking, noticeable even amidst the much love and mutual charity interchanged with so many souls in Paradise.[1] Most ardently does he express his desire to see St. Benedict's countenance unveiled by dazzling light, and no less affectionate is the saint's assurance that this high desire will be fulfilled in the Empyrean where every desire is perfected and set at rest. Dante might well have traced an analogy between St. Benedict and himself. The envy and treachery of Florentius drove Benedict from his abbey to found his new convent of Monte Cassino; the envy and treachery of the Florentines drove Dante into exile to write his mighty poem. Nor is it in the least too fanciful to assign to Monte Cassino in the history of monasticism a place analogous to that of the Divine Comedy in poetry, and to compare the founder of western monasticism with the creator of modern European

[1] Cf. TOSTI in *Dante e il suo secolo.*

poetry. Apart from the reason that this sphere is the last of the planets, the early commentators suggest a rather quaint explanation of why this desire to see the faces of the saints came to Dante especially in Saturn. Contemplatives consider all the lofty works of God, and, by contemplating creatures, they are lifted up to contemplate the Creator. Since the human soul is made to God's image and likeness, therefore the contemplatives desire to see the essence of the human soul more than of any other created thing; and it is in the face that the soul chiefly finds expression.

St. Benedict concludes with a scathing rebuke of contemporary monks, even more stern than that which Aquinas and Bonaventura had uttered for the benefit of the friars. Contemplation is neglected, the rule of St. Benedict abandoned, the abbeys have become dens of corruption and worldliness. Usury itself, that sin which was regarded as specially objectionable in clerics and monks, were less grievous in God's sight. The Papacy, the monks and the friars, have all alike fallen from their sacred calling and forsaken the principles of their founders; yet God, who did such wondrous things for His chosen people of the old law, can by a less stupendous miracle set this thing right for His Church in the new dispensation. There is again the utterance of Dante's never extinguished hope of better things, as like a whirlwind the saints are rapt together up the ladder. Since contemplation can alone enable man to penetrate by anticipation into the mysteries of Paradise, Beatrice signs to Dante to follow the example they have set and mount the ladder too. With a last farewell to his reader, Dante arrives instantaneously at the Firmament, or heaven of the Stars, entering it at the point of the sign of the Gemini or Twins, beneath which constellation he was born.

In an exquisitely lyrical passage the poet renders thanks

to his natal stars, and prays to them for a continuance of their favour that he may have virtue to complete the work for which at his birth he was impressed by their influence:—

O gloriose stelle, o lume pregno
Di gran virtù, dal quale io riconosco
Tutto, qual che si sia, il mio ingegno,
Con voi nasceva e s'ascondeva vosco
Quegli ch'è padre d'ogni mortal vita,
Quand' io sentì' da prima l'aer tosco;
E poi, quando mi fu grazia largita
D'entrar nell' alta ruota che vi gira,
La vostra region mi fu sortita.
A voi divotamente ora sospira
L'anima mia per acquistar virtute
Al passo forte, che a sè la tira.
Par. xxii. 112.[1]

That is, virtue to describe the invisible regions of Heaven beyond the Firmament, the last passage from the things of sense to the suprasensible. Since the Cherubim preside over this eighth Heaven and since their influence is communicated to the stars, giving them life and virtue in the way Beatrice

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[1] O glorious stars, O light impregnated
With mighty virtue from which I acknowledge
All of my genius, whatsoe'er it be,
With you was born, and hid himself with you,
He who is father of all mortal life,
When first I tasted of the Tuscan air;
And then when grace was freely given to me
To enter the high wheel which turns you round,
Your region was allotted unto me.
To you devoutly at this hour my soul
Is sighing, that it virtue may acquire
For the stern pass that draws it to itself.
LONGFELLOW.

had indicated in Canto II, it is therefore in reality to the Cherubim that Dante is appealing, for theirs is the mighty power with which the light of these stars is impregnated. Fulness of divine light and contemplation of the beauty of the divine order of things are the special prerogatives of the Cherubim; theirs is the celestial order that sees most into the profound mysteries of the hidden things of God and spreads the knowledge of Him upon all beneath them. Most fittingly therefore does the divine poet acknowledge their influence upon himself, who of all singers penetrated into the most secret recesses of the treasure house of the Divine Wisdom, and co-operated in the work of the Cherubim on earth by diffusing knowledge of divine truth. Like his St. Dominic, Dante was indeed a splendour of Cherubical light—

Di cherubica luce uno splendore.

But to complete his task he must not only have light from the Cherubim to comprehend the spiritual substances above him, but must also apprehend rightly the more material objects that lie below. Therefore with eyes *chiare* and *acute*, clear from passion and acute with discernment, Beatrice bids him once more look down, and behold the vast Universe above which he has already ascended. In one momentary vision he looks down upon all the seven spheres of the planets; he sees them all beneath his feet, and can comprehend their mutual relations and worth; far away below, he beholds the entire earth, and smiles at its vileness and littleness. Now he can at length measure the relative importance of the things of earth and heaven, as Beatrice would have him; he turns again his eyes to hers, prepared to witness the final glories and mysteries of Paradise. It is a comprehensive vision, hardly possible in the nature of Dante's physical scheme of the Universe from

the position in which he supposes himself to be, but possible in the light vouchsafed to one who, like St. Benedict, has at length ascended the Ladder of Contemplation. Besides the passages from the *Dream of Scipio* and the *Consolation of Philosophy*, which are usually quoted in the Commentaries, the closing lines of this Canto xxii receive very striking illustration from St. Gregory's comments upon a similar vision of St. Benedict, in which the whole world, gathered as it were together under one beam of the sun, was presented before his eyes. It occurs in that same book of the *Dialogues* upon which Dante based other parts of this Canto:—

"All creatures are, as it were, nothing to that soul which beholdeth the Creator: for though it see but a glimpse of that light which is in the Creator, yet very small do all things seem that be created: for by means of that supernatural light the capacity of the inward soul is enlarged, and is in God so extended that it is far above the world: yea, and the soul of him that seeth in this manner is also above itself; for being rapt up in the light of God, it is inwardly in itself enlarged above itself; and when it is so exalted and looketh downward, then doth it comprehend how little all that is which before in former baseness it could not comprehend. What marvel then is it, if he saw the world gathered together before him, who, rapt up in the light of his soul, was at that time out of the world. But albeit we say that the world was gathered together before his eyes, yet were not heaven and earth drawn into any lesser room than they be of themselves, but the soul of the beholder was more enlarged, which, rapt in God, might without difficulty see that which is under God, and therefore in that light, which appeared to his outward eyes, the inward light which was in his soul ravished the mind of

the beholder to supernal things, and showed him how small all earthly things were."[1]

[1] St. Gregory, *Dialogues*. II. 35. (*The Dialogues of St. Gregory the Great*, an old English Version, edited by H. J. Coleridge, S. J. Burns and Oates.)

Chapter V.

ABOVE THE CELESTIAL STAIRWAY.

I. THE FIRMAMENT OR STELLAR HEAVEN.

> "Hodie sacra et animata arca Dei viventis, quae suum in utero concepit Creatorem, requiescit in templo Domini, quod nullis est extructum manibus. Hodie Eden novi Adam paradisum suscipit animatum, in quo soluta est condemnatio, in quo plantatum est lignum vitae, in quo operta fuit nostra nuditas."
> St. John Damascene, *De Dormitione B. Mariae.*

The eighth Heaven, the Firmament or Heaven of the Fixed Stars, is the celestial counterpart of the Earthly Paradise. The opening lines of *Paradiso XXIII* carry back our thoughts to the *divina foresta spessa e viva* of *Purgatorio XXVIII.* There the song of the birds practising their art upon the branches had found utterance in Dante's verse. Here a no less beautiful transcript from bird life describes how the bearing of Beatrice prepares him for what is to come. As the bird amidst the boughs over her nest longs for the material sun that she may satisfy the wants of her little ones at dawn, so does Beatrice await the eternal spiritual Sun, whereby all her lover's desires will be set at rest.

In the Earthly Paradise Dante had beheld the scene of man's fall, so here in the Stellar Heaven he will have revealed

to him somewhat of the work of man's redemption. The Heaven grows more and more resplendent: "Behold the bands of Christ's triumph and all the fruit gathered of the circling of these spheres". The idea is clearly that of a Roman triumph, the Conqueror who has won the *gran preda* from Dis (*Inf. XII*) coming surrounded by his spoils, "with sign of victory crowned" (*Inf. IV*). The blessed both of the Old and New Testaments are represented by myriads of shining lights round the divine Sun; these are the fruits of the circling of the spheres, for the heavens are God's instruments, the hammers that the Angels wield for the government of the world and for influencing men's souls to virtuous lives. The ninth Heaven, the *Primum Mobile*, has virtue and motion communicated to it from the Empyrean; this virtue, before transmission by the Angels to the spheres of the planets, is diffused through the stars of the Firmament. Just as in this eighth Heaven the stars are seen, and it distributes its virtue through all the spheres of the planets; so all the souls of the blessed, like stars in the Church of God, who appeared to Dante separately in the single spheres of the planets by which they were influenced in life, now appear together with many more in this eighth sphere from which the divinely communicated influence came to the planets. "The seven chosen lines of battle," says Benvenuto, "are now recalled from their conflicts and gathered round their supreme Leader and Emperor to receive the reward and the triumph they have merited, that they may animate others to fight valiantly." And with them are glorious spirits more illustrious still, too near to that celestial Emperor to have been seen in the lower heavens. The sanctification and salvation of all proceeds from the merits of Christ as the light of the planets from the Sun, and Dante has, apparently, a momentary glimpse of the substance of Christ in the midst of the light that gives the saints

their light; that is, the Humanity of our Saviour is shown, an indication of the redemption of mankind through His Incarnation:—

E per la viva luce trasparea
La lucente sustanzia tanto chiara
Nel viso mio, che non la sostenea.
. . . . . .
Quivi è la Sapienza e la Possanza
Ch'aprì la strada tra il cielo e la terra,
Onde fu già sì lunga disianza.
Par. xxiii. 31, 37.[1]

Dante is roused from his ecstatic trance by Beatrice bidding him now look upon her. After what he has seen, he can sustain her smile; although he cannot yet comprehend the mystery which has been revealed to him without the aid of Theology (the mystery which will be manifested to him in the Empyrean by intuition), yet he has received something of divine light and inspiration to follow the Church's doctrine on these high matters. Dante sings again of the wondrous beauty of Beatrice and his ineffable theme,—this exceeding joy and loveliness at this point being, in the allegorical sense, undoubtedly significant of the sublime and glorious nature of the doctrine of man's redemption through Christ. At her bidding he turns again to the vision, and in Beatrice's words there is an intentional resemblance to Matilda's rebuke in the Earthly Paradise:—

---

[1] And through the living light transparent shone
The lucent substance so intensely clear
Into my sight, that I sustained it not.
. . . . . .
There are the Wisdom and the Omnipotence
That oped the thoroughfares 'twixt heaven and earth,
For which there erst had been so long a yearning.
LONGFELLOW.

Perchè la faccia mia sì t'innamora,
Che tu non ti rivolgi al bel giardino
Che sotto i raggi di Cristo s'infiora?
Quivi è la Rosa, in che il Verbo divino
Carne si fece; quivi son li gigli,
Al cui odor si prese il buon cammino.[1]

In this celestial garden which blossoms under the rays of Christ, Mary is the Rose and the Apostles the Lilies, and it is again by the figure of sunlight upon flowers in a meadow that Dante represents that Christ has passed up from this sphere to the Empyrean. There are obvious and important analogies between this heaven and the Earthly Paradise.[2] This celestial *bel giardino* corresponds to the Garden of Eden, won back for man. The last steps of Purgatory (*Purg.* xxvii. 121, etc.) are repeated in the visible rungs of the Celestial Ladder, the rebuke of Matilda (*Purg.* xxix. 61) in the admonition of Beatrice, and then comes the triumphal pageant in each. It was in the Earthly Paradise, the highest region of the terrestrial world, that Dante beheld the despoiled Tree from which the forbidden fruit had been taken, and heard the reproachful murmur of "Adamo" (*Purg.* xxxii. 37—39); so now in the Firmament, the highest visible region of the celestial world, the poet sees the fruit of the redemption and atonement by Christ. Each again is but a prelude to the ascent to *più alta salute.*

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[1] Why doth my face so much enamour thee,
That to the garden fair thou turnest not,
Which under the rays of Christ is blossoming?
There is the Rose in which the Word Divine
Became incarnate; there the lilies are
By whose perfume the good way was discovered,
LONGFELLOW. (*Par.* xxiii. 70).

[2] P. PEREZ, *Delle Fragranze onde l'Alighieri profuma il Purgatorio e il Paradiso.*

The passage of Lethe in the Earthly Paradise corresponds to the examination upon the theological virtues in the Firmament; at the intercession of the three maidens, presenting Faith, Hope and Charity, Beatrice had unveiled her countenance to Dante's gaze, and similarly it is his examination as to his knowledge of these three virtues which will permit him to make the further ascent into the hidden things of God. Also it is in this heaven that Adam himself appears to instruct Dante upon the fall, now that he has seen the mystery of Redemption; and to speak to him of the nature of his life in the Earthly Paradise, now that the poet has had a vision of the triumph of the new Adam in its celestial counterpart, the Firmament.

The apotheosis of Mary, the Rosa Mystica, besides being an anticipation of the vision of the Empyrean, is also closely connected with this correspondence of the eighth Heaven and the Earthly Paradise. In the Earthly Paradise a sweet melody that ran through the luminous air had induced Dante in holy zeal to rebuke the hardihood of Eve, through whom mankind had lost *quelle ineffabili delizie*, those ineffable delights (*Purg.* xxix. 29). So now in this heaven amidst *quelle dape*, those feasts regained, a still more sweet angelical music from the Archangel Gabriel heralds the glorification of Mary, as like a flaming torch he descends into this eighth sphere and crowns her with his song of angelic love. For Mary had healed the wound that Eve dealt the human race (*Par.* xxxiii. 4—6); or, as St. Bernard puts it: Eve was the thorn, Mary came forth as the Rose; Eve was the thorn whose pride brought death to all, but Mary was the Rose diffusing the sweet odour of eternal salvation to all.

Therefore the Archangel (who is shown in the Empyrean to have been Gabriel) first indicates Mary's share as co-operatrix in the Incarnation, and then announces her Assumption:—

Io sono amore angelico, che giro
L'alta letizia che spira del ventre,
Che fu albergo del nostro disiro;
E girerommi, Donna del ciel, mentre
Che seguirai tuo Figlio, e farai dia
Più la spera suprema, perchè gli entre.
Così la circulata melodia
Si sigillava, e tutti gli altri lumi
Facean sonar lo nome di Maria.

Par. xxiii. 103.[1]

"When the glorious Virgin this day mounted upon the heavens, without doubt she abundantly increased the joy of the citizens above," says St. Bernard; and the connection between the Assumption in this sphere and the Earthly Paradise is indicated clearly in the following passage from St. John of Damascus: "The holy and animated Ark of the living God, who had held within it its own Maker, is borne to rest in that Temple of the Lord which is not made with hands. This day the Eden of the new Adam receiveth the living garden of delight, wherein the condemnation was annulled, wherein the Tree of Life was planted, wherein our nakedness was covered." Still crowned by the flaming Archangel, the resplendent star ascends beyond Dante's sight; while the gleaming saints below show their love burning upwards after her, and then remain in Dante's sight singing the Church's Easter Hymn to the Blessed Virgin,

[1] "I am Angelic Love, that circle round
The joy sublime which breathes from out the womb
That was the hostelry of our Desire;
And I shall circle, Lady of Heaven, while
Thou followest thy Son, and mak'st diviner
The sphere supreme, because thou enterest there."
Thus did the circulated melody
Seal itself up; and all the other lights
Were making to resound the name of Mary.

LONGFELLOW.

Regina Caeli laetare, after which the Canto closes in a fervent ejaculation of praise on the poet's part to the saints of God, and especially to St. Peter the holder of the keys,—

Colui che tien le chiavi di tal gloria.

Now follows the examination upon the three steps by which man can prepare himself to partake of that glory and become a member of Christ's triumphant host. In a well-known passage of the *De Monarchia*, Dante states that to the blessedness of life eternal, which consists in the fruition of God's countenance, man can only arrive by spiritual lessons transcending human reason, to be followed in accordance with Faith, Hope and Charity. It is based upon the teaching of St. Thomas, that, to the happiness which exceeds the nature of man and for which he is nevertheless made, he can only arrive by a divine virtue involving a certain participation in the Deity: "There must be superadded to man by the gift of God certain principles, whereby he may be put on the way to supernatural happiness, even as he is directed to his connatural end by natural principles, yet not without the divine aid. Such principles are called *theological virtues*: both because they have God for their object, inasmuch as by them we are directed aright to God; as also because it is only by divine revelation in Holy Scripture that such virtues are taught."[1] They cannot be acquired by human acts, but are wholly from without, and are said to be "a faculty of supernatural action infused by God". Thus the first reason of Dante's examination at this point is that these virtues set man in the way of his ineffable last end, and are necessary for the attainment of the Beatific Vision. Again these three theo-

[1] *Summa*, I—2 q. 62. a 1. (RICKABY, *Aquinas Ethicus*).

logical virtues correspond to the three essential constituents of the supernal happiness to which Dante is about to ascend: Faith to Vision, Hope to Comprehension, Charity to Delectation or Fruition. Finally this examination relates to the Cherubim who rule this eighth Heaven, for their name indicates plenitude of the knowledge of God, and "the object of the theological virtues is God Himself as He transcends the knowledge of our reason."

Dante has first to answer St. Peter concerning Faith. He defines the virtue according to St. Paul: Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, and the argument or evidence of things that appear not. This seems to him the "quiddity" or essence of Faith. He elucidates the definition by explaining why Faith is denominated a substance, or beginning or basis, and why then an argument or convincing. The profound mysteries, which are being made manifest to him in Paradise and in which man's beatitude lies, are so concealed from all eyes on earth, since they can neither be deduced from first principles nor observed by the senses, that they exist in us only by the assent of Faith. Upon that belief our hope of attaining them is based, and therefore Faith is the support or substance of things hoped for. And from this belief we must reason without having any other sight, wherefore Faith is said to be argument or evidence. St. Thomas says, "As argument leads the intellect to adhere to that which is true, the firm adhesion of the intellect to the unseen truths of Faith is here called argument"; and in the same article of the *Summa* (II—2. 4. 1.) the Angelical Doctor shows that, although the words of the Apostle are not an exact definition of Faith, yet they completely express its "quiddity" and all other definitions of Faith are merely explanations of that of St. Paul. He suggests the following form of words as a more precise definition: *Fides est habitus mentis, quo inchoatur vita*

aeterna in nobis, faciens intellectum assentire non apparentibus, "Faith is the habit of the mind by which life eternal is commenced within us, making the intellect assent to the non-apparent."

Having drawn from Dante a fervent personal act of Faith, St. Peter next questions him as to the source of Faith, and receives as answer that the grace of the Holy Spirit, which accompanies the truths revealed in the Old and New Testaments, moves the soul to believe those revealed truths with a firmness surpassing that which comes from philosophical or scientific demonstration; the assent to articles of Faith, though free, does not originate with man's free will, but from a supernatural principle of inclination by which God moves the will. That the doctrines thus contained in the Scriptures really are what God has revealed, Dante is convinced by the miracles which followed and confirmed them. As to the truth of these miracles, the poet answers with St. Augustine that the conversion of the world to Christianity without miracles would have been a greater miracle than all the rest; and this affords him an opportunity for an implied rebuke of modern luxury and consequent degeneration in the Church, for St. Peter in poverty and fasting sowed the good plant which has been turned from vine to thorn.

After a celestial *Te Deum*, the whole heaven resounding with the divine praises, Dante proceeds to answer St. Peter's final question, as to what he believes and whence it is offered to his belief. The question practically asks the object of Faith, since the material object and the formal reason by which it is known are the two elements of the object of any cognitive habit.

> Ed io rispondo: Io credo in uno Iddio
> Solo ed eterno, che tutto il ciel muove,
> Non moto, con amore e con disio.

Ed a tal creder non ho io pur prove
Fisiche e metafisiche, ma dàlmi
Anche la verità che quinci piove.
Par. xxiv. 130.[1]

The material object of his Faith is God Himself, and what refers to God, and the cause or formal reason is His Sovereign Truth, revealed through inspired writers. And he adds an explicit mention of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, for the knowledge of which he has the same formal reason. These *prove fisiche e metafisiche* are philosophical proofs of the existence of God, apart from theology or revelation. St. Thomas (*Summa.* I. 42. 3) teaches that the existence of God can be shown in five such ways. From the point of view of motion, we must come at last to a First Mover which is moved by nothing else, and this First Mover is God. There must be some first efficient Cause, which is God. There must be something which is of itself necessary, which has not the cause of necessity from anything else, but which is the cause of necessity to other things; and this one necessarily self-existing Being is God. From the consideration of the grades of perfection in things, we must come at last to something which is supreme Truth, goodness and nobleness; and this highest being, which is the cause of all goodness and perfection, is God. And, lastly, there must be some supreme intelligence by which all natural things are ordained to an end, and this Supreme Intelligence is God.

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[1] And I respond: In one God I believe,
Sole and eterne, who moveth all the heavens
With love and with desire, Himself unmoved;
And of such faith not only have I proofs
Physical and metaphysical, but gives them
Likewise the Truth that from this place rains down.
LONGFELLOW.

Before discoursing upon the theological virtue of Hope, Dante touches first upon his earthly hope: that as St. Peter had approved his theological Faith by whirling round him three times in apostolic benediction, so Florence would recognise his political and poetical faith and devotion by the laurel crown:—

Se mai contiga che il poema sacro,
Al quale ha posto mano e cielo e terra,
Sì che m'ha fatto per più anni macro,
Vinca la crudeltà, che fuor mi serra
Del bello ovile, ov'io dormii agnello
Nimico ai lupi, che gli danno guerra;
Con altra voce omai, con altro vello
Ritornerò poeta, ed in sul fonte
Del mio battesmo prenderò il cappello;
Però che nella fede, che fa conte
L'anime a Dio, quivi entra'io e poi
Pietro per lei sì mi girò la fronte.

Par. xxv. 1.[1]

In the letter to Can Grande, as also in Cantos xv and xxi of the *Inferno*, Dante merely calls the poem his comedy, but here, and in *Paradiso* xxiii, we have the poet's own authority for the nobler title that is given to it. According

[1] If e'er it happen that the Poem Sacred,
To which both heaven and earth have set their hand,
So that it many a year hath made me lean,
O'ercome the cruelty that bars me out
From the fair sheepfold, where a lamb I slumbered,
An enemy to the wolves that war upon it,
With other voice forthwith, with other fleece
Poet will I return and at my font
Baptismal will I take the laurel crown;
Because into the Faith that maketh known
All souls to God there entered I, and then
Peter for her sake thus my brow encircled.

LONGFELLOW.

to Benvenuto, "heaven" signifies the grace of God through which the influence of the stars fitted the poet for his work, and "earth" represents the study and labour with which he strove to correspond with this divine influence. In the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* Dante protests "we love Florence so dearly that, for the love we bear her, we are wrongfully suffering exile"; but, although he describes himself as a lamb in the fold of St. John, one cannot help being a little reminded of Shakespeare's "He's a lamb indeed that baes like a bear." There is a connection between St. Peter's approbation of Dante's faith and his hope of return to Florence. In the sentence passed upon him he had been described as a foe of the Church's party *fidelium devotorum sanctæ Romanæ Ecclesiæ;* and nevertheless his faith is triumphantly accepted in Heaven by that Church's first supreme Pontiff.

Another glorified light, St. James, advances from the group of the Apostles. There are apparently many groups of blessed spirits circling round independently in this celestial garden (not merely round Beatrice and Dante as in the heaven of the Sun), their swiftness proportionate to their beatitude; and the swiftest and brightest sphere is that of the Apostles of Christ.

Ridendo allora Beatrice disse:
Inclita vita, per cui la larghezza
Della nostra basilica si scrisse,
Fa risonar la speme in quest' altezza;
Tu sai, che tante fiate la figuri,
Quante Gesù ai tre fe' più chiarezza.
Par. xxv. 28.[1]

[1] Smiling thereafterwards, said Beatrice:
"Illustrious life, by whom the benefactions
Of our Basilica have been described,

This is clearly St. James the Greater, the brother of St. John, "the baron for whom on earth Galicia is visited," although Dante seems to ascribe to him the epistle of the other St. James, "the brother of the Lord". The *larghezza* refers to the texts in its first chapter: "Let him ask of God who giveth to all men abundantly", and "Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights." Beatrice's appeal to St. James to make Hope resound in Heaven is almost, as it were, to introduce a new forgotten element into their joy, since Hope no longer exists in the blessed of Paradise. Since in the Transfiguration and other instances in the New Testament where St. Peter and the two sons of Zebedee were specially present as witnesses, they are to be thus taken as types of Faith, Hope and Charity, we have perhaps grounds by analogy for taking many of the souls in Dante's poem as merely symbols of some special virtue or vice, and so explaining their treatment by the poet. The mediæval mind found types of the theological virtues in the Old Testament in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and also in the three daughters of Job. As the Apostle who had presented Hope in our Lord's own presence, St. James proceeds to question Dante upon the subject; since this vision is granted to him that he may strengthen his own hope and that of others. To prevent vainglory, Beatrice answers one of the questions for Dante, as to his own possession of Hope (like the personal act of Faith he had made to St. Peter): no child of the Church Militant has more hope, and therefore has this vision been vouchsafed; the other questions let himself answer with God's grace.

Make Hope resound within this altitude;
Thou knowest as oft thou dost personify it
As Jesus to the three gave greater clearness."

LONGFELLOW.

Dante illustrates these examinations with references to the academic life and disputations of the university of Paris; the bachelor and the master, the student and the doctor. Benvenuto remarks that our author had personal experience of all this when he disputed at Paris, and Boccaccio records a disputation which Dante sustained there, and which was regarded as a perfect marvel of scholastic subtlety. Giovanni da Serravalle, Bishop of Fermo in the beginning of the fifteenth century, states that Dante went through the forms and kept the acts required for the doctorate of Theology, but was prevented from actually taking the degree by lack of money. There are some errors of date in the Bishop's account, and it is very possible that it was the expedition of Henry VII to Italy which put an end to Dante's Parisian theological career. It has been oddly suggested that the *cappello* for which Dante still longs is not the laurel crown, but the doctor's cap. A bachelor had to go through the Sentences of Peter the Lombard under a master, after which he was presented to the chancellor and doctors, held a public disputation and if successful became a master, *magister laureatus*, and commenced himself to lecture upon the Sentences.[1]

It is now with the definition of Hope given by the Master of the Sentences that Dante begins his answers to St. James. "Hope is the certain expectation of future beatitude, coming from grace divine and precedent merits," that is, from the grace of God and man's correspondence with that grace by good works. It proceeds from the grace of God as regards the habit of Hope, attaining to Him on whose aid it rests; it comes from merit as regards the things hoped for, because man hopes to obtain beatitude by corresponding with divine grace. Revelation is its only source. The most potent of

[1] VAUGHAN, *St. Thomas of Aquin*, Vol. II.

the many stars, from which this light comes, are the psalms of David and the epistle of St. James, Dante again assigning the epistle in question to the son of Zebedee. Doubtless the reference is especially to the text in his first chapter concerning the crown of life, which God has promised to them that love Him. Faith is again cited as the support or basis of Hope; for although mention of Hope is put into the definition of Faith, yet Faith absolutely precedes Hope, since it is Faith that proposes to us the object of Hope and shows us that it is possible of attainment. The proper and principal object of Hope is Eternal Beatitude; perfect bliss of soul and body united, as indicated in the prophecy of Isaias in the Old Testament and in the Apocalypse of St. John in the New. For as an effect must be proportionate to its cause, so must the good that we hope for from God be infinite as Himself; and such a good is life everlasting, which consists in the enjoyment of God Himself. "We must not," says St. Thomas, "hope anything of Him less than He is Himself; since His Goodness, whereby He imparts good things to His creatures, is not less than His Essence."

A psalm in chorus, exhorting mankind to confidence in God, concludes the examination: *Sperent in Te* is heard from above, to which all the saints of the Firmament make melodious response. It seems to commence above them in the Cherubim, who preside over this heaven for the government of the Universe, and to be echoed and completed by the glorified spirits around, who are thus co-operating in the work of the Cherubim.

The spirit of St. John in dazzling splendour joins the other two apostolic examiners, and, on learning from Beatrice who it is, Dante, in his anxiety to see his glorified body (if the legend of his assumption were true), gazes so fixedly into this last splendid light as to be blinded. The Apostle

bids him repeat on earth the falsity of the belief that he had not died as other men: "on earth my body is earth"; for Christ and Mary alone have body and soul already united in glory. The legend ran that St. John, like Mary, had been assumed into Heaven after death, his tomb having been found full of manna as the Blessed Virgin's of lilies. It would seem, however, that Dante did not repeat this celestial message to his friend Giotto, who has represented the rising of St. John from the tomb to rejoin Christ and the Apostles in one of his noblest frescoes in the Church of Santa Croce!

On turning to behold Beatrice, Dante finds that he has been struck blind and is unable to see her, but St. John reassures him. The blindness will be but temporary, so, while it lasts, let him discourse on Charity and state the object of his love to which his soul is tending, for Beatrice has in her eyes the virtue of the hand of Ananias. It is doubtful as to the allegorical significance of this temporary blindness. Benvenuto thinks that there is no meaning intended beyond the literal one, but mentions that many strive to expound the passage allegorically, as that the poet was troubled by some doubt, or that, in endeavouring to penetrate more deeply into the mysterious revelations of this Eagle of Christ, his intellectual sight was dazzled, and it needed the teaching of theology to restore him from the blindness of error. Others suppose that he cannot see Beatrice because the glorious depths of Charity surpass and eclipse the teachings of Theology; or that the meaning is that the grace of God sometimes deprives man for a time of spiritual sight, to then give it him again in fuller measure (Scartazzini). It may perhaps be intended as a warning against independent and unauthorised interpretation of the Apocalypse, with a possible reference to some of the errors of the later followers of Joachim; but if, as is more probable,

it is an allegory of a period of gloom and want of spiritual consolation, there would be a most beautiful fitness in the utter trustfulness of Dante's discourse on the Divine Love as long as the blindness lasts. A modern Catholic poet has written—

> Is my gloom, after all,
> Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?

God is the beginning and the end of the book of Love, since "the love of Charity tends to God as to the principle of happiness."

> Lo Ben, che fa contenta questa corte,
> Alfa ed omega è di quanta scrittura
> Mi legge Amore, o lievemente o forte.
> *Par.* xxvi. 16.[1]

Love reads his missal sometimes in a low voice and sometimes loudly; perhaps loudly when God is loved for His own sake, and more low when He is loved for benefits received or rewards hoped for; or it may be that the louder tones refer to celestial and divine love, the lower voice to a pure and sacred human love, which itself is but a stepping-stone towards the Supreme Good. This indeed is surely the central thought of the *Vita Nuova*, and the burden too of Beatrice's reproaches to Dante in the Earthly Paradise. A great poetess has exquisitely said:—

> Yea, as I apprehend it, love is such
> I cannot love you if I love not Him,
> I cannot love Him if I love not you.

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[1] The Good, that gives contentment to this Court,
The Alpha and Omega is of all
The writing that Love reads me, low or loud.
LONGFELLOW.

In Dante's answer as to the object of Charity, the definition of the virtue itself is practically contained: Charity is not any love of God, but that love of God by which He is loved as the object of beatitude, to which we are ordained by Faith and Hope. To this love of God man is directed by philosophy and authority, by reason and revelation:—

Chè il bene, in quanto ben, come s'intende,
Così accende amore, e tanto maggio,
Quanto più di bontate in sè comprende.
Dunque all' Essenzia, ove'è tanto vantaggio,
Che ciascun ben che fuor di lei si trova
Altro non è che di suo lume un raggio,
Più che in altra conviene che si muova
La mente, amando, di ciascun che cerne
Lo vero in che si fonda questa prova.

Par. xxvi. 28.[1]

There is a natural tendency of the will to anything apprehended by the intellect as good, and this tendency is Love. The greater the good apprehended, the stronger is this tendency and the more ardent the love. All finite things, however much goodness they present, can under certain circumstances be not desirable and therefore not apprehended as good. In God alone is the supreme and universal Good in which the will of man can rest; He is

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[1] For good, so far as good, when comprehended
Doth straight enkindle love, and so much greater
As more of goodness in itself it holds;
Then to that Essence (whose is such advantage
That every good which out of it is found
Is nothing but a ray of its own light)
More than elsewhither must the mind be moved
Of every one, in loving, who discerns
The truth in which this evidence is founded.

LONGFELLOW.

absolute Goodness in His Essence; compared to His Goodness all finite goods are as rays to the total light of the sun (Cornoldi). Therefore every mind that perceives God to be the Supreme Good must irresistibly be led to love Him above all things. This truth, that God is the Supreme Good, even philosophy shows, as by proofs physical and metaphysical such as Dante has already cited, but still more emphatically do revelation and authority: the voice of God Himself to Moses, and the testimony of St. John, the Eagle of Christ. Therefore both human intellect and revealed authority lead man to love God, for His own sake and above all things.

But, besides this love of God for Himself as the Supreme Good, Faith and Hope afford concordant inducements to love God, for the benefits received from Him and there wards hoped for from Him: the beauty of His visible creation, our own existence, our redemption by Christ's death, our hope of eternal bliss. These together with the vivid consciousness already mentioned, the conviction that God is the Supreme Good, have drawn the poet from the sea of disordered love and placed him on the shore of the ocean of love divine. Charity cannot exist without Faith and Hope (*Summa* I—2. 65. 5). For Charity signifies not only the love of God, but also a certain friendship with Him, a society and certain familiar conversation with Him, which begins in this present life by grace but is perfected in the future by glory; and no one can have this friendship without faith in such a society with God, and hope to attain to it. In the love to creatures the order of Charity holds. "Wherever there is a principle," says St. Thomas, "there must be order. Now the love of Charity tends to God as to the principle of happiness, in the common sharing of which the friendship of charity is founded. And therefore in the objects that are loved in

charity, there must be some order in relation to the first principle of this love, which is God."[1]

> Le fronde, onde s'infronda tutto l'orto
> Dell'Ortolano eterno, am'io cotanto
> Quanto da lui a lor di bene è pôrto,
> *Par.* xxvi. 64.[2]

The order of Charity holds even in Heaven. St. Thomas again says: "Even in our heavenly country it will hold good that one will love another, with whom he has a special tie, in more ways than he loves the rest: for virtuous motives of love will not cease to have influence on the souls of the blessed. Still to all these reasons that reason of love is there incomparably preferred which is derived from nearness to God."[3] *Ordina quest' Amore, o tu che m'ami:* there are echoes of this line of St. Francis ringing all through the Divine Comedy.

The close of the examination on Love is greeted with the threefold *Sanctus* of the saints in which Beatrice joins, and, as though by a ray of that divine love, she heals the poet's blindness with her glance. His eyes have now a clearer sight, as of one whose intellect has been matured in the flame of love, *il cui ingegno nella fiamma d'amore è adulto* (*Par.* vii).

Within a fourth light that joins the Apostles the soul of Adam rejoices in the Beatific Vision, thus appearing in this celestial counterpart of the Earthly Paradise from which Dante has seen the new Adam ascend. Dante at first

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[1] *Summa.* II—2. Q. 26. a. 1.

[2] The leaves wherewith embowered is all the garden
Of the Eternal Gardener, do I love
As much as He has granted them of good.
LONGFELLOW.

[3] *Summa.* II—2. Q. 26. a. 13.

might seem unfortunate in his method of address to our first father: *O pomo che maturo solo prodotto fosti!*[1] Dante is, however, following out the analogy of the heaven of the Stars with the Earthly Paradise, and similar expressions are used in reference to the New Adam whose ascent he has witnessed (P. Perez, *op cit.*); thus in *Purgatorio* xxxii, He is the apple tree which the Apostles beheld in blossom at the Transfiguration, and for whose fruit the Angels are greedy; and, in *Purg.* xxvii, He is the sweet apple, *quel dolce pome*, that the care of mortals pursues through so many branches. *Sicut malus inter ligna silvarum sic dilectus meus*, cries the Spouse of the Canticles.

Adam vividly shows his joy, and, seeing Dante's thoughts in God, answers his unuttered questions. The proper cause of his exile, *tanto esilio* because involving the whole human race, was not the tasting of the tree in itself,—

Ma solamente il trapassar del segno,

that is, his passing beyond the mark set for human knowledge by God, wishing to be like God as to knowledge of good and evil. St. Thomas explains that the disobedience was not in itself the first sin, but was caused by pride: "The first sin of man was in this, that he desired a certain spiritual good beyond his measure, which pertains to pride; whence it is manifest that the first sin of the first man was pride." He lived 930 years on the earth, and then was 4302 years in Limbo until Christ came crowned with victory and drew

[1] "O apple, that mature alone hast been produced." There is a curious reading of line 104, *Dante* instead of *Da te*, by which Adam addresses the poet by his name. This reading is adopted by Pietro Alighieri as peculiarly fitting from the lips of the father of all men, but it is almost universally rejected by other commentators and the reader referred to what Dante himself has said in *Purg.* xxx, where Beatrice for the only time in the poem addresses him by name. *Dante, la voglia tua discerno meglio.*

him forth. Thus, since it is now the year 1300, 6498 years have passed from his creation to the date of the vision. He was only seven hours in the garden of Eden.

The most interesting question answered is that concerning the language that Adam used and made, for the same question is discussed in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, but with a totally different answer. Here Adam states that the language which he spoke was entirely extinct before the confusion of Babel; but there Dante declares that the language of the first speaker was Hebrew, and that Adam's descendants spoke Hebrew until the confusion of Babel, after which it remained with the sons of Heber in order that Our Lord might use the language, not of confusion, but of grace. Excepting for this curious difference, Dante's theory of the changes that the speech of man undergoes is very similar in both works:—

Chè nullo effetto mai razionabile,
Per lo piacere uman, che rinnovella,
Seguendo il cielo, sempre fu durabile.
Opera naturale è ch'uom favella;
Ma, così o così, natura lascia
Poi fare a voi, secondo che v'abbella.
. . . . . .
Chè l'uso de' mortali è come fronda
In ramo, che sen va ed altra viene.

Par. xxvi. 127.[1]

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[1] For nevermore result of reasoning
(Because of human pleasure that doth change
Obedient to the heavens) was durable.
A natural action is it that man speaks;
But whether thus or thus, doth nature leave
To your own art, as seemeth best to you.
. . . . . .
Because the use of men is like a leaf
On bough, which goeth and another cometh.

LONGFELLOW.

The change in the speech of man is illustrated by the name which he gives to God the Supreme Good, which recalls one of the noblest passages of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*:—

"As to the first word uttered by the voice of him who spoke first, I feel no doubt that it is plain to a man of sound mind that this first word was the equivalent of God. It seems absurd and repugnant to reason that anything should have been named by man before God, since man had been made by Him and through Him. For since after the transgression of the human race every commencement of its speech begins with *Alas*, it is reasonable to suppose that every such commencement before the fall began with joy; and because there is no joy without God, but all joy is in God and God Himself is all joy, it follows that he who spoke first said first and before anything else, *God.*"[1]

A hymn of glory to the Blessed Trinity resounds on the close of Adam's speech, a laugh of the Universe in joy of the mystery of redemption, in the spirit of the Church's *O felix culpa quae talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem;* and the poet himself, inebriated with the plenty of God's house, breaks out into one of his divinest "enragements of celestial love," in which mysteries above sense and beyond words seem yet for once to find adequate expression:—

Al Padre, al Figlio, allo Spirito Santo,
Cominciò, Gloria, tutto il Paradiso,
Sì che m'inebbriava il dolce canto.
Ciò ch'io vedeva mi sembrava un riso
Dell'universo; per che mia ebbrezza
Entrava per l'udire e per lo viso.

[1] *De Vulgari Eloquentia.* Mr. A. G. F. HOWELL'S translation.

O gioia! o ineffabile allegrezza!
O vita intera d'amore e di pace!
O senza brama sicura ricchezza!
Par. xxvii. 1.[1]

There is silence in Heaven, and St. Peter glowing with divine anger utters a tremendous rebuke of his unworthy successors. He who on earth usurps his place has made of Rome a cloaca of blood and stench, whereby the Evil One is consoled for his fall from Heaven; the throne of Peter is vacant in the sight of God. Whether Dante would mainly refer to Boniface VIII, the pope at the epoch of the vision, or to his two successors Clement V and John XXII, the pope at the actual date of writing the poem, is of minor importance. If Boniface be the special individual intended, there is no real contradiction here with the famous lines in the *Purgatorio* where the same Pontiff is declared to be the vicar of Christ, in whose iniquitous treatment at Alagna the sufferings of Christ have been renewed. Although in Heaven he is seen to have perverted the high office which he gained by fraud and simony (*Inf.* xix. etc.), yet for men on earth he is lawful pope, his decrees are valid and must be obeyed. If Dante is rather thinking of Clement and John, the Gascon and the Caorsine, it is their desertion of the Eternal City that has made the cemetery of St. Peter

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[1] "Glory be to the Father, to the Son,
And Holy Ghost!" all Paradise began,
So that the melody inebriate made me.
What I beheld seemed unto me a smile
Of the universe; for my inebriation
Found entrance through the hearing and the sight.
O joy! O gladness inexpressible!
O perfect life of love and peacefulness!
O riches without hankering secure!
LONGFELLOW.

what it has become.[1] All Heaven and Beatrice with it change colour and blush, and there is a celestial eclipse as at the Crucifixion. St. Peter continues his stern denunciation of corruption in the Papacy and the Church:—

Non fu la sposa di Cristo allevata
Del sangue mio, di Lin, di quel di Cleto,
Per essere ad acquisto d'oro usata;
Ma per acquisto d'esto viver lieto
E Sisto e Pio e Calisto ed Urbano
Sparser lo sangue dopo molto fleto.
Non fu nostra intenzion ch'a destra mano
Dei nostri successor parte sedesse,
Parte dall'altra, del popol cristiano;
Nè che le chiavi, che mi fûr concesse,
Divenisser segnacolo in vessillo
Che contra i battezzati combattesse;
Nè ch'io fossi figura di sigillo
Ai privilegi venduti e mendaci,
Ond'io sovente arrosso e disfavillo.
In vesta di pastor lupi rapaci
Si veggion di quassù per tutti i paschi:
O difesa di Dio, perchè pur giaci?
Del sangue nostro Caorsini e Guaschi
S'apparecchian di bere. O buon principio,
A che vil fine convien che tu caschi!
Ma l'alta provvidenza, che con Scipio
Difese a Roma la gloria del mondo,
Soccorrà tosto, sì com'io concipio.
E tu, figliuol, che per lo mortal pondo
Ancor giù tornerai, apri la bocca,
E non asconder quel ch'io non ascondo.

Par. xxvii. 40.[2]

[1] It is curious that there should be no mention in the Divine Comedy of the immediate successor of Boniface, the saintly Benedict XI. The theory of some modern critics that he was intended by the Veltro is quite untenable.

[2] "The spouse of Christ has never nurtured been
On blood of mine, of Linus and of Cletus,
To be made use of in acquest of gold;

In the *De Monarchia* Dante declares that there is an express command of Christ forbidding the Church to receive temporal things, and he can find no scriptural warrant for her possessing gold and silver. The blood of the Church is her patrimony, upon which the creatures of the Avignon pontiffs are preparing to seize. "What shall we say to shepherds like these?" he exclaims; "what shall we say, when the substance of the Church is wasted, while the private estates of their own kindred are enlarged? But perchance it is better to

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But in acquest of this delightful life
Sixtus and Pius, Urban and Calixtus,
After much lamentation, shed their blood.
Our purpose was not, that on the right hand
Of our successors should in part be seated
The Christian folk, in part upon the other;
Nor that the keys which were to me confided
Should e'er become the escutcheon on a banner,
That should wage war on those who are baptized;
Nor I be made the figure of a seal
To privileges venal and mendacious,
Whereat I often redden and flash with fire.
In garb of shepherds the rapacious wolves
Are seen from here above o'er all the pastures!
O wrath of God, why dost thou slumber still?
To drink our blood the Caorsines and Gascons
Are making ready. O thou good beginning,
Unto how vile an end must thou needs fall!
But the high Providence, that with Scipio
At Rome the glory of the world defended,
Will speedily bring aid as I conceive.
And thou, my son, who by thy mortal weight
Shalt down return again, open thy mouth;
What I conceal not, do not thou conceal."

LONGFELLOW.

Difesa implies "defence" rather than "wrath"; but there is another reading, *vendetta*. The *difesa di Dio* may possibly be the Imperial Eagle.

proceed with what is set before us; and in religious silence to wait for our Saviour's help." Yet, in obedience to St. Peter, Dante will now break this religious silence and no more hide ecclesiastical corruption than St. Bernard, and St. Bonaventura and other Catholic theologians, had done before him.

After the triumphant ascent of the saints of this heaven, described by a curious but decidedly picturesque simile of flashing lights snowing upwards (which is also used for the ascent of a glory of Angels *che parean pioggia di manna* in the *Vita Nuova*), Dante at the bidding of Beatrice casts a last look down upon the earth, as he had done on his ascent to this last visible sphere. The extent of the earth which he sees below him, his own position and that of the Sun (*Par.* xxvii. 79—87) seem somewhat difficult to reconcile with his vision on first arriving at this eighth Heaven (*Par.* xxii. 133—154), so that the full solution of these two passages, the only two time-references in the *Paradiso* after the first Canto, remains a vexed question. One interpreter supposes both passages to be purely ideal descriptions at the poet's own pleasure, without any pretence to astronomical accuracy; another holds that Dante was not convinced of the ordinary view, expressed by himself elsewhere, of the inhabited world with Jerusalem on the meridian and Cadiz and the Ganges on the horizon, and wished to correct these erroneous notions from this more advantageous position of observation.

It seems clear that six hours have passed since he first looked to the earth; and I think that his former vision of the complete Universe visible below him is best explained by reference to St. Gregory's interpretation of the vision of St. Benedict, in which the whole world was gathered together before his eyes, as the enlargement of the capacity of the inward soul by means of that supernatural light

vouchsafed to contemplative spirits. Even the more limited view obtained in this Canto enables Dante to take more exquisite delight in the divine beauty of Beatrice; from a right estimation of things of earth he turns with increased ardour to the teaching of Theology, and with Beatrice he passes up into the ninth and swiftest Heaven, the Crystalline or *Primum Mobile.* At this point of passing beyond the visible Firmament he has thus taken his last look to the earth, and has again, as frequently at such critical points in his pilgrimage, uttered his protest against the corruption of Christendom and his expectation of a deliverer from on high.

II. THE PRIMUM MOBILE OR CRYSTALLINE HEAVEN.

Ἔστι μὲν ἱεραρχία, κατ' ἐμὲ, τάξις ἱερὰ, καὶ ἐπιστήμη, καὶ ἐνέργεια πρὸς τὸ θεοειδὲς ὡς ἐφικτὸν ἀφομοιουμένη, καὶ πρὸς τὰς ἐνδιδομένας αὐτῇ θεόθεν ἐλλάμψεις ἀναλόγως ἐπὶ τὸ θεομίμητον ἀναγομένη. Σκοπὸς οὖν ἱεραρχίας ἐστὶν, ἡ πρὸς Θεὸν, ὡς ἐφικτὸν, ἀφομοίωσίς τε καὶ ἕνωσις. DIONYSIUS, *De Caelesti Hierarchia.*

THE ninth and swiftest Heaven, the Crystalline or *Primum Mobile*, above the visible Firmament, is that which directs with its movements the daily revolutions of all the others, by which they all daily receive below the virtue of all their parts. Therefore, on reaching this uniform heaven, Beatrice discourses upon the order of the heavens and the want of government on the earth, whereby it does not follow this divine order and will not correspond with the virtuous influence of these spheres. Nature, the first principle of motion and of rest, that in the Ptolemaic system makes the earth motionless in the centre and the heavens revolving round it, has its starting point in this heaven, which itself is bounded only by the light and love of the divine Empyrean, that last Heaven of all where God directly rules. In that Divine Mind is enkindled the love of the Seraphim that turns this ninth sphere, and the virtue that from them it rains down upon the Universe:—

Non è suo moto per altro distinto;
Ma gli altri son misurati da questo,
Sì come dieci da mezzo e da quinto.
E come il tempo tenga in cotal testo
Le sue radici, e negli altri le fronde,
Omai a te puot'esser manifesto.

Par. xxvii. 115.[1]

This heaven moves swiftest of all, because of the fervent desire of all its parts to be united to that divine Heaven of peace. All motion is measured by its motion; and, since time is measured by the visible motion of the sun and the planets, and this visible motion is caused and measured by the invisible motion of this ninth Heaven, therefore in this sphere is the first measure of time. The Tree of Time has its roots in this crystalline Heaven as in a vase, and its leaves in the other celestial circles; its roots are hidden, for its origin is in the invisible motion of this *Primum Mobile;* its leaves are visible in the other heavens, whose motion is our visible measure of time. But on earth covetousness overwhelms and blinds mankind, so that they cannot lift up their eyes and thoughts to behold celestial things and consider this divine order. Good beginnings are rendered abortive, all is corruption, and *la bella figlia* of the Sun of Justice (the Church or human life in general) has become dark with sin in the sight of God. Want of government has wrought this ruin:—

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[1] Its motion is not by another meted,
But all the others measured are by this,
As ten is by the half and by the fifth.
And in what manner time is such a pot
May have its roots and in the rest its leaves,
Now unto thee can manifest be made.

LONGFELLOW.

Pensa che in terra non è chi governi;
Onde si svia l'umana famiglia.[1]

For of mankind's two divinely appointed guides that are to lead them to blessedness of this life and of life eternal, the one in the sight of God is a simoniacal usurper, and the other, even in the sight of men, is a selfish tyrant who has taken no steps to make himself lawful Cæsar. Yet before very long, by the circling of these heavens, the instruments of divine government, deliverance and reformation will surely come from on high; the fleet will run a direct course, and true fruit will come after the flower. Doubtless it is again the prophecy of the *Veltro*, who shall come in the might of the Blessed Trinity, through the virtue of the heavens, to extirpate covetousness and bring back the golden age. Thus Beatrice in the heaven of the Seraphim repeats the prophecy which St. Peter had uttered in the sphere of the Cherubim, as though both Love and Knowledge had this same message to announce to the world.

In this ninth Heaven Dante beholds another preparatory vision, in anticipation of the more complete vision of the Empyrean. The vision of the eighth Heaven had been an anticipation of the vision of the Humanity of Christ which at last he is to see in the vision of the Divine Essence, and of the relations of Christ to His Virgin Mother and saints; that of the ninth similarly concerns the unity in Essence of the Divinity, and the Angels in their relation to God and man. For this is the heaven from which proceed time and motion, with all celestial influence for government of the world; containing all the other spheres, it holds in its virtue and influence the essence of all things that it thus encloses (*Par.* ii. 112—114); and for this

[1] Think that on earth there is no one who governs;
Whence goes astray the human family.

government of the world these celestial intelligences are the ministers of Divine Providence, to direct the circling of these spheres (*ibid.* 127—129). Dante beholds, first reflected in the eyes of Beatrice and then in reality, an indivisible atomic Point radiating light and symbolising the unity of the Divinity, as a fitting prelude to the more intimate vision of the Blessed Trinity which will be vouchsafed in the Empyrean. It is a point of most surpassing brilliancy but of most minute size, as a symbol of unity and of immateriality:—

> Un punto vidi che raggiava lume
> Acuto sì che il viso, ch'egli affuoca,
> Chiuder conviensi, per lo forte acume;
> E quale stella par quinci più poca,
> Parrebbe luna locata con esso,
> Come stella con stella si colloca.
>
> *Par.* xxviii. 16.[1]

Deus est maxime unus: God is the supreme unity. St. Bernard, in the book on Consideration which Dante names in the letter to Can Grande, says: *Inter omnia quæ unum dicuntur, arcem tenet unitas divinæ Trinitatis*, among all things which are called one, the unity of the Blessed Trinity holds the highest place. The supposed Dionysius begins his treatise on the *Celestial Hierarchy* by speaking of the perfect unity of the Divine Light, which penetrates through all creation to draw all things to oneness with

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[1] A point beheld I, that was raying out
Light so acute, the sight which it enkindles
Must close perforce before such great acuteness.
And whatsoever star seems smallest here
Would seem to be a moon, if placed beside it
As one star with another star is placed.
LONGFELLOW

itself. The One is here seen mirrored in the eyes of Beatrice in reference to the theological demonstrations of the Church as to the unity of God, for in the *Convito* Dante declares that the eyes of his allegorical Lady are the demonstrations of philosophy. Just as here the unity of God is reflected in Beatrice, so in the *Vita Nuova* the Trinity was manifested in her life and death: "The great Efficient of Miracles being of Himself three Persons who, being three, are also One, this Lady was accompanied to the end by the number nine that men might clearly perceive her to be a nine, that is, a miracle, whose only root is the Holy Trinity."

Around this one point are revolving nine circles of flame symbolising the nine angelic orders, the higher orders, being nearer to the One, moving more swiftly and with more brilliant flame as partaking most of the divine light. This circling and flaming of the angelic orders symbolise contemplation in regard to God and action in regard to His creation. The light divine is poured forth in naked purity and simplicity upon these celestial intelligences, and they, by their ministration, render it perceptible to man. There are three angelic Hierarchies, each composed of three orders. According to the supposed Dionysius the Areopagite, "A Hierarchy is a sacred order and science and energy, which is assimilated as far as possible to the godlike, and elevated to the imitation of God proportionately to the divine illuminations conceded to it. The scope of a Hierarchy is the utmost possible assimilation to and union with God." A Hierarchy is an image of the Divine Beauty, and the names of these celestial intelligences denote the characteristics by which they specially imitate the divine likeness.[1]

[1] WESTCOTT, *Dionysius the Areopagite* (*Essays in the History of Religious Thought in the West*); LUPTON *Joannes Coletus super opera Dionysii*; J. PARKER, *The Celestial and Ecclesiastical Hierarchy of Dionysius the Areopagite.*

Dante says of the higher Angels in their relation to the Divinity that they partake more of the divine truth:—

Credo però che più di lei s'invera.[1]

As to the knowledge of God Himself, all the Angels see Him in the same way, but as regards created things there are degrees in their knowledge. The superior Angels have a more universal knowledge of truth than have the lower; they comprehend a thing known more perfectly and clearly. Contemplating the Divine Wisdom with clearer vision, they know more and higher mysteries of grace in the vision of God, and they enlighten the lower Angels on these matters. The higher Angel instructs the lower about all things that it knows; it communicates the knowledge given to itself from above to the lower Angel, but such knowledge is not received so excellently in the lower being as it is in the higher, so that the superior will always remain in a higher order and have more perfect science.

From that radiant divine point all that is has its being; from it goes forth the spiritual light through all creation, and the first circle, being nearest, is swiftest through burning love:—

Da quel punto
Dipende il cielo e tutta la natura.

"From that point depends the Heaven and all Nature." In his profession of Faith, in Canto xxiv., Dante had uttered his belief in One God, sole and eternal, who moveth all the heavens with love and desire, Himself not moved: that is, in God the *Prime Movent*, in support of which he alleged philosophical proofs as well as revelation. Here therefore

[1] I think because more with its truth imbued.

he is quoting Aristotle, the words being a translation of a sentence of the Stagirite concerning the Prime Movent:—

"This Prime Movent, which causes motion without itself being moved, must be eternal, must be Essence and must be Actuality. It must be the first object of desire and the first object of will. Since the Prime Movent is itself immovable and exists in actuality, it is impossible that that can be other than what it is in any respect whatever.... It exists by necessity, and by that species of necessity which implies the perfect and beautiful: and in this character it is the originating principle. Without it, good or perfection cannot be had; it is what it is absolutely, without possibility of being otherwise. From a principle of this kind depend the Heaven and all Nature."[1]

In a somewhat analogous way "Dionysius" commenced his treatise on the Celestial Hierarchy by quoting and interpreting the text from the epistle of St. James, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights."

A difficulty arises in the poet's mind from the apparent want of correspondence between the order of the Universe and the order seen in these angelic circles. Here the circle is swiftest in its motion and most brilliant in its light in proportion to its nearness to the centre. But this suprasensible world is the exemplar of the sensible or material world,—"for nature exists first in the mind of the First Agent who is God; then in heaven, as in an instrument by means of which the likeness of the Eternal Goodness unfolds itself on shapeless matter."[2] How is it, then, that in the material heavens the very opposite is seen to what is here shown

[1] *Metaphysica* XXX. (GROTE'S Aristotle).
[2] *De Monarchia*, II. 2. CHURCH.

in its celestial exemplar, since, the further the heavens are from the earth which is their centre, the more swift is their motion and the more divine their character? Beatrice's answer is that Dante has again gone astray by merely regarding appearances, by applying his measure only:—

Alla parvenza
Delle sustanzie che t'appaion tonde.[1]

If he considers only their virtue (for they are not really circles or hoops of fire, but this is merely another sensible sign), he will find perfect correspondence between the greater virtue and influence of the heavens nearer to God and the diviner character of the higher orders of Angels which preside over them. The *Primum mobile*, which sweeps along with it the rest of the Universe, corresponds to the Seraphim who love most and know most; and, similarly, the other heavens each to its own celestial intelligence or special angelic order, the higher order to the more noble sphere, the lower to the less. As a star in a clear sky, so does this preliminary truth shine brightly in Dante's mind, since the clouds of doubt and perplexity are resolved by the words of Beatrice, and he beholds more clearly the vast army of Angels flashing light, as they circle round the Point and chant their Hosannas. It is as Spenser writes in his *Hymne of Heavenly Love*:—

An infinite increase of Angels bright,
All glistring glorious in their Makers light.

There they in their trinall triplicities
About Him wait and on His will depend,
Either with nimble wings to cut the skies,
When He them on His messages doth send,
Or on His owne dread presence to attend,
Where they behold the glorie of His light
And caroll Hymnes of love both day and night.

[1] To the *appearance* of the substances that appear to thee round.

Dante has some difficulty concerning the relative rank of the angelic orders, as he had already expressed a view in the *Convito* which had proved erroneous in the matter of the movers of the third Heaven. Beatrice therefore proceeds to name and distinguish these nine orders of celestial intelligences. The division of Angels into three Hierarchies, or sacred principalities, is based upon the diversity of their participation in the perfection of their Divine Prince, and in the different ways in which the things about which they are illuminated can be considered in relation to the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity (*Summa* I. 108. 1). As Beatrice names the orders of the first Hierarchy which dwells on the threshold of the Divinity, Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones, she scarcely distinguishes the Seraphim from the Cherubim:—

> I cerchi primi
> T'hanno mostrato i Serafi e i Cherubi.
> Così veloci seguono i suoi vimi,
> Per simigliarsi al punto quanto ponno,
> E posson quanto a veder son sublimi.
>
> *Par.* xxviii. 98.[1]

For the Seraphim are named from excess of love, the Cherubim from plenitude of knowledge, but love and knowledge are inseparable, and, since the love is consequent upon the vision and in proportion to it, the Seraphim of a necessity not only love more, but also know more than the Cherubim. Thus Beatrice had called them—

> Il cerchio che più ama e che più sape.

> The primal circles
> Have shown thee Seraphim and Cherubim.
> Thus rapidly they follow their own bonds,
> To be as like the Point as most they can,
> And can as far as they are high in vision.
>
> LONGFELLOW.

The *vimi*, the band that holds them fast to God, is that immediate vision and possession of God wherein is beatitude. The swifter a circle moves round, the more like a point of light does it become; even as a Hierarchy, in the teaching of "Dionysius", strives after likeness to God as far as is permitted to it, and aims at the utmost possible assimilation to and union with Him. The relation of the Seraphim to the Cherubim, as their names imply, is that of fire to light: "The first subsist by their fire of love, the second by their light of knowledge; and the one represent the Wisdom of God as the others do His Love." Dean Colet in his treatise on Dionysius calls the Seraphim wise loves (*amores sapientes*) and the Cherubim lovers of wisdom (*Sapientiae amantes*):—

"For there is in each both love and wisdom. But in the first, inasmuch as they are nearer to God, the very Sun of Truth, this exists in a far greater degree. Therefore that which is in them is named *Love*. In those next after them all things are in a less degree; and they, as compared with the first, appear to be only Lights. Therefore they have the appellation of *Knowledge*. Such then is the difference between these orders; namely, that in the latter is knowledge proceeding from love; in the former is love proceeding from knowledge. In the latter, love is knowledge; in the former, knowledge is love. For in the Angels an intensity of knowledge is love; a less intense love is knowledge."[1]

The Thrones terminate the primal Triad. They are the special images of God's power, the mirrors of His judgment, and represent especially His steadfastness. The peculiar office of the Thrones is that of purification, as illumination is that of the Cherubim and perfecting that of the Seraphim:

[1] J. H. LUPTON, *Joannes Coletus super opera Dionysii.*

"Power cleanses, clear Truth makes serene, finished Love makes perfect."[1]

The difference in degree of bliss among these angelic orders leads Beatrice to touch somewhat upon the nature of beatitude in general. The joy of all intellectual beings, Angels and men alike, is in proportion to the depth of their vision of God:—

E dèi saper che tutti hanno diletto,
Quanto la sua veduta si profonda
Nel Vero, in che si queta ogn'intelletto.
Quinci si può veder come si fonda
L'esser beato nell'atto che vede,
Non in quel ch'ama, che poscia seconda.
E del vedere è misura mercede,
Che grazia partorisce e buona voglia;
Così di grado in grado si procede.

Par. xxviii. 106.[2]

Thus the essence of beatitude consists in vision upon which follows love, and the degree of the Beatific Vision granted to each depends upon meritorious correspondence with grace. St. Thomas, discussing the question whether happiness is an activity of the understanding or of the will, declares: "From the beginning we wish to gain this intellectual end; but we actually do gain it only by this, that

[1] J. H. LUPTON, *Joannes Coletus super opera Dionysii.*

[2] And thou shouldst know that they all have delight
As much as their own vision penetrates
The Truth, in which all intellect finds rest.
From this it may be seen how blessedness
Is founded in the faculty which sees,
And not in that which loves, and follows next.
And of this seeing merit is the measure,
Which is brought forth by grace and by good will;
Thus on from grade to grade doth it proceed.

LONGFELLOW.

it becomes present to us by an act of understanding, and then the will rêsts delighted in the end already gained. So therefore the essence of happiness consists in an act of understanding. But the delight that follows upon happiness belongs to the will." And, further on, "Love ranks above knowledge in moving, but knowledge goes before love in attaining; for nothing is loved but what is known, and therefore an end of understanding is first attained by the action of understanding, even as an end of sense is first attained by the action of sense."[1]

The second Hierarchy is composed of Dominations, Virtues and Powers, those orders whose names designate a certain common government or disposition. Their special functions have been already considered. The third Hierarchy is formed by the Princedoms or Principalities, Archangels and Angels, the last name being also applied in a general way to all these celestial intelligences; for Angels signify Messengers, and in this respect the higher Angels can execute the function of the lower, while they have in addition the special properties from which they derive their own name. Thus Christ Himself is called the Angel of the great Counsel. It is this lowest Hierarchy which especially contemplates the love of the Holy Spirit, and communicates the gifts of God to man:—

> Questi ordini di su tutti rimirano,
> E di giù vincon sì che verso Dio
> Tutti tirati sono e tutti tirano.
>
> *Par.* xxviii. 127.[2]

The function of the celestial intelligences is twofold,

[1] *Summa.* I—2. Q. 3. a. 4. (*Aquinas Ethicus*).

[2] These orders upward all of them are gazing,
And downward so prevail, that unto God
They all attracted are and all attract.

contemplation of God and manifestation of Him to creatures to bring them to Him. "The Angels, when taught, teach others; they turn towards God; they are steadfast in themselves; they pour down influence from above" (Colet on Dionysius). Receiving from God the divine light and love that makes them like to Him, the higher orders communicate this light and love to the lower, like mirrors reflecting the divine rays; and these lower orders reflect it to men, that they may render all things, as far as possible to each nature, like to God and in unity with Him. Beatrice impresses upon Dante that hers is the division of Dionysius, who contemplated these orders *con tanto disio*, and to whom his teacher St. Paul, who had been rapt up into heaven, revealed many such celestial secrets.[1] St. Gregory's divergence, which was followed by St. Bernard but at which, according to Beatrice, he himself afterwards smiled, was after all a very trifling one, since he merely placed the Principalities in the second Hierarchy and the Virtues in the third. Dante apparently attaches importance to the difference, because St. Gregory's division would mar the correspondence between these angelic orders and the spheres that they move, and the souls that appear under their influence in these heavens. However, the poet's own earlier classification of Angels in the *Convito* differs considerably more from that of Dionysius than St. Gregory's does; for he there places the Thrones in the lowest and the Powers in the highest Hierarchy, and composes the middle Hierarchy of Principalities, Virtues and Dominations. Dante also, in the *Convito*, distinguishes the Hierarchies in relation to their

[1] In the *De Caelesti Hierarchia*, the author speaks of his "divine initiator" and his "illustrious preceptor", but it was later paraphrasts who inserted the name of St. Paul as the person meant. It is now usually held that the works ascribed to the Areopagite were produced at the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century.

principal subject of contemplation, touching upon their special relationship to the Persons of the Blessed Trinity—the supreme Power of the Father, the supreme Wisdom of the Son, the supreme and most fervent Love of the Holy Spirit. And as each Person in the Trinity may be considered in a threefold manner, the three orders in each Hierarchy have each a different subject of contemplation in the mutual relations of the Divine Persons to each other, the Seraphim contemplating the Father in respect to Himself alone.

After a moment's silence in joyful contemplation of God, a moment expressed by an involved astronomical simile, Beatrice answers Dante's unasked questions concerning the creation of these celestial intelligences; for she has seen his desires in God, *dove s'appunta ogni ubi ed ogni quando*, in whose infinity all places centre and all times are present:—

> Non per aver a sè di bene acquisto,
> Ch'esser non può, ma perchè suo splendore
> Potesse, risplendendo, dir: Subsisto;
> In sua eternità di tempo fuore,
> Fuor d'ogni altro comprender, come i piacque,
> S'aperse in nuovi amor l'eterno amore.
>
> *Par.* xxix. 13.[1]

In eternity, before time and space were, the Eternal Love at His own good pleasure created new beings to love and

---

[1] Not to acquire some good unto Himself,
Which is impossible, but that His splendour
In its resplendency may say '*Subsisto*'.
In His eternity outside of time,
Outside all other limits, as it pleased Him,
Into new Loves the Eternal Love unfolded.
LONGFELLOW.

Fuor d'ogni altro comprender may mean either "outside of space" or merely "incomprehensibly."

be loved. God did not create for His own gain, for, since His Goodness is perfect and independent, it is incapable of increase; but from His Goodness, His infinite Love alone. According to St. Thomas, "God's principal purpose in creation is the good which consists in the resemblance of creatures to Himself": *Perchè suo splendore potesse risplendendo dir, Subsisto.* Cornoldi comments: "The splendour is light derived from light, and is the fairest image of it. All the Universe is the finite image of God; it is as the external splendour of that infinite light. In creation God gave existence to an external image of Himself, and His splendour having received this existence could say *I subsist.*"

Nor before this creation of the Universe was God inactive. Time was not, there was no first nor after in Eternity; creation added no new act to the act of infinite love wherewith God loved Himself. By creation God did no new act, for He is infinite Act and nothing can be added to Infinity.[1] Time itself commenced with creation,—

Lo discorrer di Dio sovra quest'acque;

—When the Spirit of God moved over the waters, imprinting upon the formless *materia prima* the substantial forms or divine ideas. St. Augustine thus interprets the waters over which the Spirit of God moved in *Genesis* i. 2, as perhaps not meaning water in the ordinary sense of the word, but the *materia prima*, the subject of all the substantial transformations of the corporeal Universe. The Spirit of God moved over the primal matter as the will of an artist might be said to move over the wood or other subject of his operation.

[1] CORNOLDI'S commentary is mainly followed on the first part of this Canto.

In the mode of production, creation was instantaneous: form and matter, and substances composed by the union of both, rayed into perfect being, three arrows from the three-corded bow of the Blessed Trinity, since creation is the work of all three Persons; into perfect being, *ad esser che non avea fallo*, for "God saw all the things that He had made and they were very good;" and instantaneously, for (*Eccles.* xviii. 1) "He that liveth for ever created all things together." St. Thomas explains that God created all things together with regard to the formless substance of things, but not together in respect of distinction and embellishment. Simultaneously with creation was established the order of the Universe, the various grades of perfection in all created substances from the elements to the Angels:—

Concreato fu ordine e costrutto
Alle sustanzie; e quelle furon cima
Nel mondo, in che puro atto fu produtto.
Pura potenzia tenne la parte ima;
Nel mezzo strinse potenzia con atto
Tal vime, che giammai non si divima.
Par. xxix. 31.[1]

These two last lines refer either to the heavens, which, being incorruptible, are not subject to the separation of form

[1] Order was con-created and constructed
In substances, and summit of the world
Were those wherein the pure act was produced.
Pure potentiality held the lowest part;
Midway bound potentiality with act
Such bond that it shall never be unbound.
LONGFELLOW.

It may be observed that the elements are not supposed by scholastic philosophy to be pure matter, as the notes in Longfellow seem to imply, but corporeal substances composed of matter and primitive forms (See CORNOLDI, *The Physical System of St. Thomas;* and Dr. MOORE, *Studies in Dante*, I. p. 109.)

from matter; or, more probably, to all created bodies below the Angels, which are constituted in a determinate nature by the union of substantial forms with matter. Thus the angelic intelligences are highest of all creatures, pure act, that is, pure subsistent forms, created in the Empyrean Heaven simultaneously with the creation of corporeal creatures and of the nine lower heavens that they move and rule. Beatrice declares that, in spite of St. Jerome's theory that they were created ages before the corporeal world, the Scriptures show that their creation was simultaneous with that of material things (*Gen.* i. 1, *Eccles.* xviii. 1), and reason confirms it, since the movers of the heavens would not have been perfect without the act of moving. St. Thomas says, "The Angels are part of the Universe and no part is perfect separated from its whole." Immediately after their creation a section of the Angels fell through the pride of Lucifer, who desired to be like God and drew the others into his sin. The rest that remained faithful, in reward of their humility, were enlightened by grace and, receiving it with open affection, merited eternal beatitude and at once attained perfection, and have their wills confirmed for ever in good. Since they thus attained beatitude, their vision of the Divine Essence, in which the beatitude of Angels and men consists, has never been interrupted; and therefore, according to Dante, Angels need not memory, for memory implies a vision interrupted by a new object, *vedere interciso da nuovo obbietto.*

From rebuking equivocal doctrines taught on earth concerning Angels, Beatrice passes to one of Dante's usual outbursts against the scandals of the times. She denounces the deviations of false philosophy, where love of vain show leads men from the true path in order to seem original by starting new systems and schools, and the Scriptures are neglected and distorted. Her words are an anticipation of

the days of the Renaissance when great ecclesiastics advised men of culture not to read the Scriptures, as they were bad for their taste and would not improve their style: as Ruskin has put it, "Christ's teaching was discovered not to be rhetorical, St. Paul's preaching not to be logical, and the Greek of the New Testament not to be grammatical." If Dante gives an accurate picture of the state of things in his day, the seeds were already being sown of the "Infidelity of the Renaissance." Preachers put forward their own inventions or discuss unsuitable and unessential matters, to which the culpable ignorance of their flock responds, and, instead of solemnly and reverently preaching the sacred truths of Christ's word, they go to preach with jokes and foolery, and are perfectly content if the congregation laugh loudly. But the Devil, nestling in the merry preacher's cowl, enjoys the joke most of all, and is doubtless especially moved to hilarity at the scandalous abuses of spurious indulgences, the making profit out of the faithful by pretending to grant indulgences and pardons for which these monks had no papal bulls or licenses. Of course the poet's sarcasm is not directed against indulgences themselves, for the episode of Casella and other passages in the *Purgatorio* show that he held the Catholic doctrine on the subject, but only against trafficking in them and pretending to grant them without the Pope's license, *senza conio*. It is to fully appreciate the fun of this deception that the diabolical bird nestles in the pardoner's cowl.

After this digression, Beatrice turns again to her doctrine of the Angels, since two more points remain for Dante's consideration; their number and their manifestation of the infinite power of their Creator. Their number, as revealed by Daniel, passes human conception; his "thousand thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand" indicate a number beyond the expression of human figures. And yet, in this

immense number of splendours of the divine light, the divine light is diversely communicated to each:—

La prima Luce, che tutta la raia,
Per tanti modi in essa si recepe,
Quanti son gli splendori a che s'appaia;
Onde, però che all'atto che concepe
Segue l'affetto, d'amor la dolcezza
Diversamente in essa ferve e tepe.
Vedi l'eccelso omai, e la larghezza
Dell'eterno valor, poscia che tanti
Speculi fatti s'ha, in che si spezza,
Uno manendo in sè come davanti.

Par. xxix. 136.[1]

Not only is every Angel of this almost infinite number different from any other in its reception of divine light and in its burning love, but not two are of the same species. According to Thomist philosophy, in things incorruptible there is only one individual of each single species, and the species is sufficiently conserved in one. Even in each order each Angel is of a different rank. It is impossible that there should be two Angels of one species, just as we cannot talk of several separate whitenesses or more than one humanity (*Summa* I. 50. 4). St. Thomas declares that

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[1] The primal light, that all irradiates it,
By modes as many is received therein,
As are the splendours wherewith it is mated.
Hence, inasmuch as on the act conceptive
The affection followeth, of love the sweetness
Therein diversely fervid is or tepid.
The height behold now and the amplitude
Of the eternal power, since it hath made
Itself so many mirrors, where 'tis broken,
One in itself remaining as before.

LONGFELLOW.

all the Angels differ in species according to the different grades of intellectual nature; the perfection of the angelic nature requires multiplication of species, but not multiplication of individuals in one species.

Chapter VI.

THE EMPYREAN.

I.

"O Alta Quies, O Sublimis Requies, ubi omne quod humanitus moveri solet motum omnem amittit, ubi omnis qui tunc est motus divinitus fit, et in Deum transit!"

Richard of St. Victor, *De Exterminatione Mali.*

"Non est equidem quod me magis delectet, sed nec est quod terreat magis, quam de gloria Virginis Mariae habere sermonem."

St. Bernard, *De Assumptione.*

As stars from the sky at the approach of dawn, so do the angelic circles vanish gradually from Dante's gaze; and as the brightest star is the last to be lost to view, so now the Seraphim, the brightest and divinest circle, is the last to disappear. For, in a way, the brightest sensible signs are stars in man's intellectual darkness, and the Sun of Truth itself is about to dawn upon Dante in the Heaven of Heavens. These circles of flame and that indivisible Point of surpassing light are merely sensible signs of the supreme vision, and gradually die away in the full sunlight of absolute Truth. Although to enable Dante to have an idea of its relation to the angelic Hierarchies, this Point had

seemed surrounded by them, yet it is a sign of that which is not circumscribed and circumscribes all things:—

Non circonscritto e tutto circonscrive

Then follows a final eulogy of the transcendent loveliness of Beatrice, as her singer nears the end of his pilgrimage and poem. All his former words of her, brought together into one hymn of praise, would not suffice him now:—

La bellezza ch' io vidi si trasmoda
Non pur di là da noi, ma certo io credo
Che solo il suo Fattor tutta la goda.[1]

For, in the literal sense, Beatrice is about to return to her throne in the Empyrean, and no mortal can adequately express the glory of a blessed spirit high in Paradise, since it is derived from the vision of God; and, in the allegorical sense, of the beauty and the truth of the loftiest doctrines of Theology concerning Paradise and the Divinity, God Himself alone can have full knowledge and perfect understanding. The mere remembrance of her sweet smile dazzles the memory as the sun does a weak sight. The same thought occurs in that Canzone of the *Convito* which Casella had sung to Dante on the shore of Purgatory:—

Cose appariscon nello suo aspetto,
Che mostran de' piacer del Paradiso;
Dico negli occhi e nel suo dolce riso,
Che le vi reca amor com' a suo loco.

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[1] Not only does the beauty I beheld
Transcend ourselves, but truly I believe
Its Maker only may enjoy it all.
LONGFELLOW.

Dante's words, *di là da noi*, imply a complete transcending of our earthly conditions and comprehension.

Elle soverchian lo nostro intelletto,
Come raggio di sole un fragil viso.[1]

The perfect picture of ideal womanhood commenced in the *Vita Nuova* is completed, and will admit of no more finish or perfection. It remains for the artist but to set the seal and signature upon it, as he will do in his lyrical farewell in the next Canto.

They have reached the Empyrean, the heaven of the last and perfect happiness of man, the true home of Angels and saints, issued from the last material sphere into the heaven that is pure light:—

Luce intellettual piena d'amore,
Amor di vero ben pien di letizia,
Letizia che trascende ogni dolzore.
Par. xxx. 40.

Cornoldi has pointed out that Beatrice in these three lines indicates the three grades of felicity according to scholastic philosophy: intellectual light, that is, to behold God with the intellect; love which is consequent upon the vision; joy which arises from the possession of the Supreme Good, and which therefore in itself comprehends all joy. Joy, says St. Thomas, is properly the crown and complement of happiness; it is caused by the fact of desire resting in attained good.

Dante's eyes are at first dazzled. He is again blinded

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[1] Things in her aspect are made manifest
That witness of the bliss of Paradise;
Of her sweet smile I speak, and beaming eyes,
Which Love brings there, the place of their desire.
Our feeble mind by them is all opprest,
As when the sun on vision weak doth rise,
PLUMPTRE.

for a time, and his blinding is expressed in words recalling those used of the conversion of St. Paul:—

Come subito lampo che discetti
Gli spiriti visivi, sì che priva
Dell' atto l'occhio de' più forti obbietti;
Così mi circonfulse luce viva,
E lasciommi fasciato di tal velo
Del suo fulgor, che nulla m'appariva.
Sempre l'Amor che queta questo cielo
Accoglie in sè con sì fatta salute,
Per far disposto a sua fiamma il candelo.
Non fur più tosto dentro a me venute
Queste parole brevi, ch' io compresi
Me sormontar di sopra a mia virtute;
E di novella vista mi raccesi
Tale, che nulla luce è tanto mera,
Che gli occhi miei non si fosser difesi.[1]

It is difficult at this point to separate the *essential* from the *moral* Paradise, since one is the reward of the other; and in this blindness, followed by a new celestial sight and

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[1] Even as a sudden lightning that disperses
The visual spirits, so that it deprives
The eye of impress from the strongest objects;
Thus round about me flashed a living light,
And left me swathed around with such a veil
Of its effulgence, that I nothing saw.
"Ever the Love which quieteth this heaven
Welcomes into itself with such salute,
To make the candle ready for its flame."
No sooner had within me these brief words
An entrance found, than I perceived myself
To be uplifted over my own power,
And I with vision new rekindled me,
Such that no light whatever is so pure
But that mine eyes were fortified against it.

LONGFELLOW.

new faculties for comprehending the essence of things spiritual, there seems a certain analogy to the passage from mortal life to immortality, even if it is not taken as an actual allegory of death itself. In the nine lower heavens, from the greatest of which he has just issued, the poet has contemplated as much of the glory of God and of the nature of the Divinity as is permitted to any living being; and now he is to represent the reward to which such contemplation leads. Since no living being can see God, something must intervene analogous to the separation of the soul from the body, to give probability to the close of the vision (V. Barelli, *L'allegoria della D.C. esposta*). Perhaps, however, it should rather be regarded as derived, like so many other points in the *Paradiso*, from the teachings of Richard of St. Victor, concerning the state of ecstatic contemplation,—the highest to which man can attain. This contemplation in the ecstatic condition is found by that great mystic represented by the type of Benjamin, for whose life Rachel died[1]: "Rachel dies when Benjamin is born, because when the mind of man is rapt above itself it transcends all bounds of human reasoning. For when, elevated above itself and rapt in ecstasy, it beholds the light of the Divinity, all human reason yields. What is the death of Rachel but the failing of reason?" It is probably in correspondence with this teaching of Richard of St. Victor, that Dante is blinded to enable him to ascend to this celestial contemplation: for, before the vision dies away, he is to see by divine light those spiritual things which the blessed in Paradise behold with immediate intuition. This momentary blindness of Dante, this temporary death of his eyesight to give birth to the final vision of Paradise,

[1] Cf. VAUGHAN, *St. Thomas of Aquin.* Vol. i. There was a very quaint English translation of the *Benjamin Minor* printed in 1521.

clearly corresponds to the death of Rachel to give birth to Benjamin. He does not, however, at once attain to this final vision. His eyes are straightway re-enkindled with a new and perfect sight, and there follows the first vision of the Empyrean. This is still symbolical, still merely a foreshadowing preface of the truth, although a much nearer approximation to that final truth than any of the former visions have been.

E vidi lume in forma di riviera
Fulvido di fulgore, intra due rive
Dipinte di mirabil primavera.
Di tal fiumana uscian faville vive,
E d'ogni parte si mettean nei fiori,
Quasi rubini che oro circonscrive.
Poi, come inebriate dagli odori,
Riprofondavan sè nel miro gurge,
E s'una entrava un' altra n'uscia fuori.[1]

The wondrous flowers on the two banks are the blessed of the Old and New Testaments, the living sparks the Angels, all irrigated by the river of divine grace. The river descending from a sublime and infinite height is usually supposed to symbolise the effusion of the divine grace upon all creatures, flowing down from the source of light. "The stream of the river maketh the city of God joyful:

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[1] And light I saw in fashion of a river
Fulvid with its effulgence, 'twixt two banks
Depicted with an admirable Spring.
Out of this river issued living sparks,
And on all sides sank down into the flowers,
Like unto rubies that are set in gold;
And then, as if inebriate with the odours,
They plunged again into the wondrous torrent,
And as one entered issued forth another.
LONGFELLOW.

the most High hath sanctified His own tabernacle." According to another interpretation (Perez) this river symbolises the course of the ages, ordained and directed to the glory of the Word and the triumph of His elect; but the former explanation is to be preferred. St. Bernard writes, "The Cherubim, drinking of the fountain of wisdom from the mouth of the Most High, pour out the streams of knowledge upon all His citizens, and this perhaps is what the Psalmist spoke of, the stream of the river making the city of God joyful." Of this stream Dante, a new co-operator in the work of the Cherubim, must drink, if he would fully see this vision of God which he has to relate to diffuse His knowledge on earth as the Cherubim in Heaven. It is a shadowy preface of the truth; these things are not of themselves unintelligible, but they are signs of spiritual substances which the poet's soul is not yet elevated and strengthened to behold intellectually with immediate intuition.

At the bidding of Beatrice, Dante drinks with his eyes of this river, and sees it now as a circular ocean of light:—

Di sua lunghezza divenuta tonda. [1]

This probably symbolises the return of the outpouring of God's grace to Him, as to the first source and ultimate end. Another interpretation (Perez) supposes that by the river becoming round is signified the sea of Eternity, into which the rivers of the ages flow; but on the whole the former interpretation is, as before, to be preferred. It is the light of glory which proceeds from the Divine Essence to Dante's eyes, the action of which had been explained to him by St. Peter Damian in Canto xxi. By it the saints and Angels, as it were, drop their masks and appear to Dante

[1] Out of its length to be transformed to round.
LONGFELLOW.

in the form in which he sees them throughout what remains of the vision. Most significant is the triple repetition of the *Io vidi*—"I saw"—at this critical point of the vision, recalling the *Cristo* which the poet will rhyme only with itself:—

Così mi si cambiaro in maggior feste
Li fiori e le faville, sì ch'io vidi
Ambo le corti del ciel manifeste.
O isplendor di Dio, per cu'io vidi
L'alto trionfo del regno verace,
Dammi virtù a dir com'io lo vidi.[1]

It is by the *lumen gloriae* that he beholds this final vision:—

Lume è lassù, che visibile face
Lo Creatore a quella creatura,
Che solo in lui vedere ha la sua pace.[2]

By the *lumen gloriae* God disposes the mind of Angel or man so that it becomes in a measure god-like, and is rendered capable of union with or immediate intuition of the Divine Essence. By the light of glory, the Divine Essence is made the intelligible form of the intellect.

This ocean of divine grace is reflected from the light

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[1] Thus into greater pomp were changed for me
The flowerets and the sparks, so that I saw
Both of the Courts of Heaven made manifest.
O splendour of God! by means of which I saw
The lofty triumph of the realm veracious,
Give me the power to say how it I saw!
LONGFELLOW.

[2] There is a light above, which visible
Makes the Creator unto every creature,
Who only in beholding Him has peace.
Ibid.

which comes from God, and from which the heaven of First Movement, the *Primum Mobile*, receives all its vitality and virtue for the government of the Universe. In this sea from which they receive glory and beatitude the saints of Paradise are mirrored, as the grass and flowers on a hill side in a limpid stream at its foot; just as Rachel in Dante's dream at the close of the *Purgatorio* gazed ever into the mirror to see her fair eyes, and Leah adorned herself with flowers in preparation for this end. "Flowers," says St. Bernard, "are noted for their beauty, their sweet fragrance, and their hope of fruit; a threefold grace," nor are the images of flowers under which the saints had first appeared to Dante lost, but all are united in one most perfect flower,—the emblem of Her who is most perfect and glorious of all:—

> La rosa sempiterna,
> Che si dilata, digrada, e redole
> Odor di lode al sol che sempre verna.[1]

The whole of this *allegrezza* is taken in by Dante's sight in spite of its vastness, nor is their felicity increased or diminished by nearness or farness from the centre:—

> Presso e lontano lì nè pon nè leva,
> Chè dove Dio senza mezzo governa,
> La legge natural nulla rileva.[2]

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[1] The Rose eternal,
That spreads, and multiplies, and breathes an odour
Of praise unto the ever-vernal Sun.
LONGFELLOW.

[2] There near and far nor add nor take away;
For there where God immediately doth govern,
The natural law in naught is relevant.
Ibid.

Beatrice's office of guide has almost ended. Her function was to lead man in Dante's person to blessedness of life eternal, according to the things that have been revealed; to blessedness of life eternal which consists in the fruition of God's countenance, to which man of his natural powers cannot rise, if he be not aided by the divine light. She has brought Dante to this blessedness, he has just received this divine light. Now she leads him into the golden centre of the Rose. The seats in this vast convent of white stoles are nearly all full, but among the empty thrones is one prepared for the Emperor Henry VII:—

In quel gran seggio, a che tu gli occhi tieni
Per la corona che già v'è su posta,
Prima che tu a queste nozze ceni,
Sederà l'alma, che fia giù Augosta,
Dell'alto Arrigo, ch'a drizzare Italia
Verrà in prima ch'ella sia disposta.
La cieca cupidigia, che vi ammalia,
Simili fatti v'ha al fantolino,
Che muor di fame e caccia via la balia.[1]

It will be remembered that Henry of Luxemburg died on August 24th, 1313, while Dante was to live until the 14th of September 1321, the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. Dante is inflexibly severe upon the Italian resistance

[1] "On that great throne whereon thine eyes are fixed
For the crown's sake already placed upon it,
Before thou suppest at this wedding feast
Shall sit the soul (that is to be Augustus
On earth) of noble Henry, who shall come
To redress Italy ere she be ready.
Blind covetousness, that casts its spell upon you,
Has made you like unto the little child
Who dies of hunger and drives off the nurse."
LONGFELLOW.

to the Emperor's efforts, but Benvenuto, after explaining how Dante rebukes the Italians for rejecting the help and remedy offered at times by Church or Empire, carefully remarks: "Nevertheless, whatever our author may say, I know not of any useful thing that either French or Germans do in Italy, save only public and private plundering." Although the work of Theology has been done, the ideal spiritual authority has one final lesson to utter, and it takes the form of a terrible warning to those who have usurped her place upon the chariot of the Bride, as had been shown in figure in the Earthly Paradise:—

E fia prefetto nel fôro divino
Allora tal, che palese e coverto
Non anderà con lui per un cammino.
Ma poco poi sarà da Dio sofferto
Nel santo uficio: ch'ei sarà detruso
Là dove Simon mago è per suo merto,
E farà quel d'Anagna andar più giuso.[1]

Boniface VIII and Clement V are regarded by Dante as the men who have usurped and degraded the place on the chariot which Beatrice, the ideal spiritual power, the papal authority of the *De Monarchia* purified from the abuses and corruptions of the fourteenth century, should hold. For Dante, beholding the beatitude which God has prepared for men, must naturally pass in thought to those ideal guides, the Emperor and the Pope, that the ineffable Providence

[1] "And in the sacred forum then shall be
A Prefect such, that openly or covert
On the same road he will not walk with him.
But long of God he will not be endured
In holy office; he shall be thrust down
Where Simon Magus is for his deserts,
And make him of Alagna lower go!"
LONGFELLOW.

has appointed to guide man to happiness and bliss, and judge how each is fulfilling his lofty mission. The Emperor Henry will strive his utmost to do his part and perish in the heroic attempt, but Boniface and Clement have fallen short and are not leading man rightly to this beatitude. This terrible denunciation of the Pontiffs in question are the last words that Beatrice utters in the sacred poem. With them the task of the allegorical spiritual guide is ended, and the veil of allegory will now be dropped from the glorified woman.

II.

THE last three cantos of the *Paradiso* are on a somewhat different footing to the rest of the poem. They are the anagogical completion of the whole work, resting upon and crowning the literal sense and the allegory as delight sits upon activity. Here the literal, the allegorical and the anagogical meet, and are almost undistinguishably blended. In the seven spheres of the planets there have been shown to Dante, and the poet has represented to his readers, the various lives in which man may use his free will in God's service and so merit reward from His justice, culminating in the life of contemplation, figured in the blessed spirits of the sphere of Saturn. Then by this same contemplation, ever under the guidance of the theological teaching of the Church, he has seen in the eighth sphere and in the ninth heaven anticipatory visions of the glory and of the nature of God and His saints; and now, after his blindness and illumination by the *lumen gloriae*, he can soar aloft by a wondrous foretaste and anticipation into the Paradise to which the soul attains after death. He is now in that state of ecstasy which, in the teaching of Richard of St. Victor comes to man in the highest stages of contemplation, in which "without any veils of creatures, *non per speculum in ænigmate*, but in its pure simplicity, the soul gazes upon Truth." In this new life of ecstatic contemplation, Dante beholds the glory and bliss of the saints and Angels in the snow-white Rose of Paradise.

In forma dunque di candida rosa
Mi si mostrava la milizia santa,
Che nel suo sangue Cristo fece sposa.
Ma l'altra, che volando vede e canta
La gloria di Colui che la innamora
E la bontà che la fece cotanta,
Sì come schiera d'api, che s'infiora
Una fiata ed una si ritorna
Là dove il suo lavoro s'insapora,
Nel gran fior discendeva, che s'adorna
Di tante foglie; e quindi risaliva
Là dove il suo Amor sempre soggiorna.
Le facce tutte avean di fiamma viva,
E l'ale d'oro; e l'altro tanto bianco
Che nulla neve a quel termine arriva.

Par. xxxi. 1.[1]

In the ceremony of blessing the Golden Rose, it is said to be an emblem of Christ, the flower of the field and the lily of the valley, and a sign of the joy of the Church triumphant and militant in Him (Hettinger). The Rose is also an emblem of His Mother, and in this her flower

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[1] In fashion then as of a snow-white rose
Displayed itself to me the saintly host,
Whom Christ in his own blood had made his bride;
But the other host that flying sees and sings
The glory of Him who doth enamour it,
And the goodness that created it so noble,
Even as a swarm of bees, that sinks in flowers
One moment, and the next returns again
To where its labour is to sweetness turned,
Sank into the great flower, that is adorned
With leaves so many, and thence reascended
To where its love abideth evermore.
Their faces had they all of living flame,
And wings of gold, and all the rest so white
No snow unto that limit doth attain.

LONGFELLOW.

all the saints are united in Paradise, because she, the Mystical Rose, is the type of the Church, Christ's Spouse,—Herself the true Spouse of the Holy Spirit.

St. Anselm, too, likens the Angels to busy bees in God's service, flying between the flowers of earth and the hives of Heaven, sweetly disposing all things. In a similar strain St. Bernard describes the Angels as faithful messengers of love between the lover and the beloved, between God and His Spouse the Church, bearing vows and bringing gifts; and indeed he uses this simile of the bee and the flowers in a more sacred sense still: "The bee is that which feedeth among the lilies, that dwells in the flower-bearing land of the Angels. Hence it flew away to the city of Nazareth, which is interpreted a Flower, and came to the sweet smelling flower of perpetual Virginity. Thereon it alighted, and therein it rested, and thereto it clung."[1] There is doubtless an allegorical significance in the colours of the Angels: the living flame of charity, the gold of humility or of incorruptibility, the white of exceeding purity; their whiteness is beyond the spotless whiteness of purest snow, that is, beyond all purity that man can conceive of, since not even the saints can attain to the purity of an Angel who has never sinned. Perhaps there is a reference in these colours to the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, since Lucifer's three coloured faces are an infernal parody of their Divine attributes: the golden wings may refer to the Power of the Father, the white to the Wisdom of the Son, the flaming face to the burning Love of the Holy Spirit. Ascending and descending, they communicate the

[1] This quotation, and that on page 235, are from the translation of St. Bernard's praises of the Blessed Virgin "arranged and translated by a secular priest" under the title *Behold Your Mother* (T. Richardson & Son, London and Derby, 1886).

divine peace and love to the saints; for the Angels have a deeper knowledge of the Divine Essence than the saints (save only Mary, whose knowledge of God surpasses that of the Seraphim), and the saints have their accidental joy increased from the truths that these Angels impart to them from God.[1] There is no impediment now to the divine light, and all Paradise is absorbed in the vision and love of God.

There is a final invocation for those on the tossing sea of human life, that the Trinal light of the One star may shine upon its darkness; there is the last look to Florence with its famous irony; and the poet is absorbed in the glory of the celestial Rome of his ecstatic pilgrimage. As the barbarians from the savage North were stupefied at the wonders of the earthly Rome, so Dante from Florence in the divine Rome of Eternity:—

> Io, che al divino dall'umano,
> All'eterno dal tempo era venuto,
> E di Fiorenza in popol giusto e sano,
> Di che stupor doveva esser compiuto![2]

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[1] The function of the Angels in Dante's vision is analogous to that of Love, as described by Diotima in Plato's *Symposium*:

"He is a great spirit and like all spirits he is intermediate between the divine and the mortal. He interprets between gods and men, conveying and taking across to the gods the prayers and sacrifices of men, and to men the commands and replies of the gods; he is the mediator who spans the chasm which divides them, and therefore in him all is bound together." (JOWETT'S translation).

[2] I who to the divine had from the human,
From time unto eternity, had come,
From Florence to a people just and sane,
With what amazement must I have been filled!
LONGFELLOW.

Just as Virgil's place had been taken by Matilda in the Earthly Paradise, when the end had been attained at which Dante was to aim under his leadership, so here Beatrice resigns her office to St. Bernard, now that the term of her guidance too has been reached. The imperial authority by means of human philosophy led man to blessedness of this life; this consisted in the exercise of his natural powers and so, in that blessedness, the place of guide was fitly taken by the type of the glorified active life (or possibly by the priesthood whose functions might fitly be to mediate between the Empire and the Church, and whose office in other respects might seem figured in Matilda). So here the spiritual authority, by means of theology, has led man to the blessedness of life eternal; this consists in the fruition of the sight of God's countenance, and for this fruition the place is fitly taken by the type of the glorified mystical contemplative. It may well be that St. Bernard is a type of the ecstatic contemplation in Richard of St. Victor's doctrine. The glorified active life exercises man's natural powers in the noblest way in blessedness of this life, in good works and in the virtuous use of earthly things, and is more directly ordered to the love of our neighbour: but the glorified contemplative life directly and immediately appertains to the love of God; it begins on earth in the speculation of supernal things, but is perfected and glorified in Heaven in the immediate intuition of God. This seems the more usual view of the symbolism of the substitution of St. Bernard for Beatrice in Dante's final instruction. God cannot be seen and known by theology, but by grace and contemplation. Excess of charity and the intercession of the Mother of Divine Love are needed for the completion of Dante's work; therefore the place of Ecclesiastical Authority and its Theology is taken by—

La vivace
Carità di colui, che in questo mondo,
Contemplando, gustò di quella pace;[1]

by him who was believed to have been inspired by Mary herself to write fittingly concerning Her:—

E la Regina del cielo, ond'i' ardo
Tutto d'amor, ne farà ogni grazia,
Però ch'io sono il suo fedel Bernardo.[2]

Barelli has pointed out that these last aids which Dante needs, although derived from the divine science or Theology, are yet rather of the heart than of the intellect. They are derived from the divine science, since the heart does not usually tend towards an object unless first the intellect is convinced of the excellence of it, but they are something distinct from that divine science: "Beatrice has sent me," says St. Bernard.

According to Professor Lubin, this substitution of Bernard for Beatrice signifies that Theology has given place to Intuition. Theology is not needed in the Empyrean, for all truths are there seen in the immediate intuition of the supreme Truth. Glorified contemplation, ecstatic contemplation, intuitive contemplation: it seems rather a matter of words, and the two interpretations need not exclude each other. Beatrice sends St. Bernard to Dante, because it is Theology that predisposes and prepares man for this con-

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The living
Charity of the man who in this world
By contemplation tasted of that peace.
LONGFELLOW.

And she, the Queen of Heaven, for whom I burn
Wholly with love, will grant us every grace,
Because that I her faithful Bernard am.
Ibid.

templation and intuition (Lubin). St. Bernard himself teaches that God and the blessed spirits can be considered by us by opinion, faith, and intuition. In Intuition (*intellectus*) these mysteries are seen manifestly and without any veil; intuition is the certain and manifest knowledge of invisible things, such clear knowledge that there is nothing more left to seek of those things about which this intuition is had (*De Consideratione* V. 3). Therefore here the saint fitly says:—

A terminar lo tuo disiro
Mosse Beatrice me del luogo mio.[1]

Since therefore her allegorical task is completed, allegory has ceased as far as Beatrice is concerned, and the real woman is seen—

Nel trono che i suoi merti le sortiro;[2]

crowned in her glory with the rays of the light eternal. And Dante now at the foot of Madonna's throne, "that blessed Queen Mary whose name had always a deep reverence in the words of holy Beatrice" (*Vita Nuova*), addresses Beatrice for the last time. In the superb lyrical flight with which Dante returns thanks and finally commends himself to her, the only vestige of allegory left is that he is thanking the woman he had loved, for having taken upon her this mystical function in order to lead him from servitude to the liberty of the children of God:—

O Donna, in cui la mia speranza vige,
E che soffristi per la mia salute
In inferno lasciar la tue vestige;

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[1] To put an end to thy desire
Me Beatrice hath sent from mine own place.

[2] Upon the throne her merits have assigned her.

Di tante cose, quante io ho vedute,
Dal tuo potere e dalla tua bontate
Riconosco la grazia e la virtute.
Tu m'hai di servo tratto a libertate
Per tutte quelle vie, per tutti i modi,
Che di ciò fare avei la potestate.
La tua magnificenza in me custodi
Sì che l'anima mia, che fatta hai sana,
Piacente a te dal corpo si disnodi.[1]

The three closing lines are clearly a prayer for final perseverance, the same grace that St. Bernard will presently implore for Dante from the Blessed Virgin, although the *Ottimo* oddly seems to suppose that Dante prays to Beatrice that his soul may remain in Paradise. Her smile and last look upon Dante, as she turns back to the contemplation of God, show the poet that his final prayer is accepted by her. Allegory is practically over now, and Beatrice is once more the woman loved.

St. Bernard now commences his function of preparing Dante for the final consummation of the vision. He must gradually prepare himself to behold the Divine Essence, by discipline of his sight in first contemplating the glory of

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[1] "O Lady, thou in whom my hope is strong,
And who for my salvation didst endure
In Hell to leave the imprint of thy feet,
Of whatsoever things I have beheld,
As coming from thy power and from thy goodness
I recognise the virtue and the grace.
Thou from a slave hast brought me unto freedom,
By all those ways, by all the expedients,
Whereby thou hadst the power of doing it.
Preserve towards me thy magnificence,
So that this soul of mine, which thou hast healed,
Pleasing to thee be loosened from the body."
LONGFELLOW.

the saints, and, above all, that of Mary, *La Regina cui questo regno è suddito e devoto.* And, indeed, all this part of the poem is thoroughly steeped in the spirit of Mary's *fedel Bernardo*, who in one of his sermons calls her the Sinner's Ladder: "whose top like the ladder which the patriarch Jacob saw touched the heavens; nay, passed through the heavens, until it reached the well of living waters which are above the heavens," and, elsewhere, "Let us seek for grace and let us seek for it through Mary; for what she seeks for she finds; for she cannot seek in vain."

So now at Bernard's bidding, Dante lifts up his eyes to the throne of Mary. In the highest and most glorious part of the Heaven of Heavens, Dante sees her enthroned. As the east at sunrise, so here the throne of Mary is brighter than all else in Paradise; and, surrounded by a multitude of Angels with outspread wings, Dante beholds her indescribable beauty and glory. With St. Bernard he is absorbed in devout and loving contemplation of her, and indeed this vision of Mary in the midst of this surpassing light of Heaven, in the sunrise of her Son's glory, is a poetical rendering of a thought of Bernard himself:—

"Justly is Mary said to be clothed with the Sun, since she has pierced through the exceeding deep abyss of God's wisdom, far deeper than could be believed; so that, as far as her condition as a creature will suffer, without personal union, she seems to be plunged in the light inaccessible. By the fire of that Sun the prophet's lips were cleansed; by the same fire the Seraphim are kindled with love. But in a far higher sense did Mary merit, not, as it were, to be touched merely on her lips, but rather to be covered all over and encompassed by that fire, and, as it were, to be enclosed therein."

One of the greatest of modern poets has written in a similar strain:—

> Soul, is it Faith, or Love or Hope,
> That lets me see her standing up
> Where the light of the Throne is bright?
> Unto the left, unto the right,
> The Cherubim, succinct, conjoint,
> Float inward to a golden point,
> And from between the Seraphim
> The glory issues for a hymn.

With Canto xxxii St. Bernard commences Dante's final instruction—

> Affetto al suo piacer, quel contemplante
> Libero ufficio di dottore assunse.[1]

To instruct others, as St. Bernard himself says, is a work of the active life, but saints sometimes return from the contemplative life to the active for the good of their neighbours, and this, he rather quaintly remarks, is signified in the text of the Canticle of Canticles: "Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come." The same return from the contemplative to the active life in love of charity is indicated in verses 100—102 of this Canto.

St. Thomas has a fine sentence upon the same subject: "Of its kind the contemplative life is of greater merit than the active. But it may happen that one individual merits more in the works of the active life than another in the works of the contemplative, if through an abounding love for God, to the end that His will may be fulfilled, and for

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[1] Absorbed in his delight, that contemplator
Assumed the willing office of a teacher.
LONGFELLOW.

His glory, this person endures to be separated from the sweetness of divine contemplation for a time."[1]

St. Bernard therefore proceeds to point out the order of the saints. Throughout the Rose two descending lines divide the redeemed of the Old Testament from those of the New. The one line is composed of holy women and passes down from the glorious throne of the Queen of Heaven, "blessed above all women of the earth;" the other is of holy men, passing down from the seat of the Precursor of Christ, than whom "there hath not risen among them who are born of women a greater."

The motives that induced Dante's selection of the individual saints to form these two lines, are more obvious in the case of the women. Eve, Rachel, and Beatrice, Sara, Rebecca, Judith, Ruth, and other Hebrew women form that line; St. Francis, St. Benedict, St. Augustine, and others not named, the other. Eve, *tanto bella*, so beautiful because created immediately by God and therefore most perfect, is of course the type of Mary, the second Eve. Thus Tertullian says: "Whereas Eve believed the serpent and Mary believed Gabriel, the fault of Eve in believing, Mary by believing has blotted out:" and other fathers write in a similar strain. Eve is the Mother of all living; Mary the Mother of Him that liveth, and so the Mother of all that live by Him. Also Eve, according to St. Isidore, is a type of the Church; the Church was consecrated as Christ's bride by the blood and water that flowed from His side as He died upon the Cross, just as Eve was made from the rib of the sleeping Adam. Rachel and Beatrice are side by side in the third row, for in other parts of the

[1] St. Thomas, *Summa*. ii—2. Q. 182. a. 2. (RICKABY. *Aquinas Ethicus*.)

poem they had symbolised Contemplation and Theology, and the truths which contemplation beheld in the old law are expounded by the Church's theology in the new. Rachel too is regarded by St. Isidore as a type of the Church, comprehending the mysteries of Christ by her clear contemplation, which the blear-eyed Leah (the type of the synagogue) could not do. Beatrice's place in the third circle is apparently connected with her mystical relation to the number Three, so insisted upon in the *Vita Nuova*; we are reminded, too, of the lines in the same book:—

> La gentil donna, che per suo valore
> Fu posta dall' altissimo Signore
> Nel ciel dell' umiltate, ov'è Maria.[1]

corresponding with the words that St. Bernard had used of her—

> Nel trono che i suoi merti le sortiro.

So too the *pacifica oriflamma* (the *oriflamme* being an ancient name for the royal standard), the title that Dante had applied to Mary, recalls his account of the death of Beatrice in the *Vita Nuova:* "Lo Signore della giustizia chiamò questa gentilissima a gloriare sotto la insegna di quella reina benedetta, Virgo Maria, lo cui nome fue in grandissima reverenza nelle parole di questa Beatrice beata."[2]

Sara, the Mother of God's chosen people, who brought

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[1] That lady of all gentle memories
Whose new abode
Lies now, as it was well ordained of God,
Among the poor in heart, where Mary is.
ROSSETTI.

[2] "The Lord God of Justice called my most gracious lady unto Himself that she might be glorious under the banner of that blessed Queen Mary, whose name had always a deep reverence in the words of holy Beatrice." *Ibid.*

forth the free children of promise, is also a figure of the Church; the Church is in secret the bride of Christ, and it is not until the kings of the earth strive to violate her that they find that the Church is truly the spouse of God. Rebecca again, in her marriage with Isaac, is the type of the Church in her mystical union with Christ. Judith, the deliverer of her people, is the type of Mary, to whom the Church applies the words that Ozias addressed to Judith on her return from the camp of Holofernes; she is also a type of the Church, as punishing the enemies of the Faith. Ruth, the ancestress of Christ according to the flesh, as the woman of another country that married an Israelite is a figure of the Church coming from the Gentiles to Christ. These, with the other Hebrew women dividing the leaves of the Rose, form the bond of union between the Old Testament and the New, as ancestresses of Christ or types of His Mother and His Church.

The reasons for the special position of St. Francis, St. Benedict, and St. Augustine, in the opposite line, are not quite so obvious. Dr. Scartazzini thinks that the line of men are those who, in a way, continued the work of St. John the Baptist in preparing unto the Lord a perfect people: the founders respectively of the *poverelli di Cristo*, of monasticism in the west, and of scientific theology. It will be observed that immediately next to the Precursor of Christ comes His closest and most perfect imitator, in whose body were renewed the sacred stigmata of His Passion. The *alto disio* that Dante had expressed to St. Benedict, to see him with face unveiled, is here fulfilled; and, in connection with the ardent affection he had shown towards that saint in the seventh sphere, it is curious to notice that Benedict is here in the third row opposite to Beatrice—the Blessed in name opposite to the Giver of Blessing. The great contemplative monk is thus likewise

fitly placed opposite to Rachel, the type of Contemplation itself.

All the seats of those who believed in Christ to come are full already, there are still vacant places in the other half of the Rose; the number of both will be equal when the celestial garden shall be filled:—

> Or mira l'alto provveder divino,
> Chè l'uno e l'altro aspetto della fede
> Egualmente empierà questo giardino.[1]

This, however, seems a peculiar theory of Dante's own. The usual view is that the blessed after Christ must immensely surpass in numbers those of the Old Testament, since the latter was merely a time of preparation. St. Thomas warily remarks: "Of the number of human creatures predestinated, some say it will equal those of the fallen Angels and of the whole angelic creation combined. But it is better said that the number of the elect who are to dwell in bliss in Heaven is known to God alone, as the Collect for the Living and the Dead has it." Dante's view may be in part induced by his desire to preserve perfect symmetry in his wonderful creation of the snow-white Rose of Paradise.

All round the Rose there runs a further line of division, dividing into a lower and an upper quarter each of the two great halves of the celestial flower. Above this line are those saved by their own meritorious correspondence with the divine grace, those who have merited reward by right use of their free will; below are the little children who, before and after Christ, died before attaining to the

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[1] Behold now the high providence divine;
For one and other aspect of the Faith
In equal measure shall this garden fill.
LONGFELLOW.

use of reason, blessed in this true life not through their own merit, but through the merit, of others (Christ or their parents), under various conditions in the Old and New Testaments—conditions which culminate in that of Christian Baptism. They were hastened before their time to this true life, a *festinata gente a vera vita*, and still retain the appearance and voices of children. They too are placed higher or lower in this Paradise: they have different grades of bliss, although, having no free election, they could not merit or demerit. Thus there again, for the last time, arises in Dante's mind another of those difficulties concerning the mysteries of Divine Predestination and the Divine Justice, which had been answered, or rather silenced, for him, in the lower spheres. How can it be, since they were saved by no merit of their own, that they should now hold higher or lower degrees of beatitude? Is it by chance or by some special favour of God to some, and, if so, how can it be just? St. Bernard's answer is in effect the same as Dante had received from other saints in the lower spheres. Nothing is by chance in Paradise: God wills it so, and what He wills is Justice. God gives grace in different degrees according to His good pleasure, and to this grace the degrees of glory correspond. Thus Dante's difficulties concerning this insoluble mystery are finally answered:—

Chè per eterna legge è stabilito
Quantunque vedi, sì che giustamente
Ci si risponde dall'anello al dito.

. . . . . .

Lo Rege, per cui questo regno pausa
In tanto amore ed in tanto diletto
Che nulla volontà è di più ausa,
Le menti tutte nel suo lieto aspetto,
Creando, a suo piacer di grazia dota
Diversamente; e qui basti l'effetto.

Par. xxxii. 55.[1]

His difficulty concerning Divine Predestination is finally answered. For since it had occurred to him again and again throughout the *Paradiso*, it was necessary that it should be finally set at rest in the heaven where all desire is satisfied. Up to this point Dante only has it by faith that he cannot penetrate into this mystery. Peter Damian in the seventh sphere had told him that although the *lumen gloriae* enables the saints and Angels to see the Divine Essence, yet not the highest of the Seraphim nor the purest of the saints can penetrate with intellectual sight into the abyss of Divine Predestination. So far he has had only faith to satisfy him as to the truth of this statement; but now that he himself has been enlightened by that *lumen gloriae*, he finds by proper experience and intuition that these limits are prescribed to all created intellect, and thus his desire is satisfied—he is at length convinced.

Now in final preparation for the vision of the Divine Essence comes the poet's third and most perfect vision of Mary, of this the supreme of created things as the final stepping-stone to the vision of the Creator. St. Thomas, in discussing the question whether God could create things better than He actually has, says that there are three things which have a certain extrinsic excellence from their relation to God Himself, and in this way nothing could be created

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Note on previous page.

[1] For by eternal law has been established
Whatever thou beholdest, so that closely
The ring is fitted to the finger here.
The King, by means of whom this realm reposes
In so great love and in so great delight
That no will ventureth to ask for more,
In his own joyous aspect every mind
Creating, at his pleasure dowers with grace
Diversely; and let here the effect suffice.

LONGFELLOW.

better than them: the Humanity of Christ, inasmuch as it is united to God, beatitude because it is the fruition of God, and the Blessed Virgin because she is the Mother of God. Therefore this third vision of her is the prelude to the vision of the Divinity. From Beatrice to Mary, from Mary to God, such are the spiritual steps of Dante's ascent.

Riguarda omai nella faccia ch'a Cristo
Più si somiglia, chè la sua chiarezza
Sola ti può disporre a veder Cristo.[1]

It is perhaps another thought suggested by Richard of St. Victor: *Nec solum per Mariam lux gratiae, sed etiam visio Dei animabus data est in caelis.* Dante turns therefore to her again, and sees her surrounded by the Angels with Gabriel—

Innamorato sì che par di fuoco:[2]

hovering on outstretched wings before her, and all the court of Heaven responding to his *Ave Maria.* This vision is the most ineffable and the most like to God that has yet greeted his eyes in Paradise. Again he has recourse to St. Bernard:—

alla dottrina
Di colui ch' abbelliva di Maria
Come del sole stella mattutina.[3]

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[1] Look now on the face that is most like to Christ, for only its brightness can dispose thee to see Christ. Richard of St. Victor says, "not only through Mary is the light of grace, but even the vision of God given to souls in heaven." In *Inferno* ii. Mary had recommended Dante to Lucia, the type of Grace Illuminating.

[2] So enamoured that he seems of fire.

[3] To the doctrine of him, who drew light from Mary as the morning star from the sun.

And St. Bernard's answer, where he speaks of the surpassing excellence of this Angel, his exceeding *baldezza* and *leggiadria*, who was chosen by God to announce to Mary the message of the Incarnation, does indeed closely correspond to his own *dottrina* in one of his sermons, where he interprets the name Gabriel as "strength of God", and points out how this Archangel was found to be of such great excellence among Angels as to be deemed worthy of such a name and such an embassy.

St. Bernard has now but little further instruction to give Dante as to the order of the celestial Rose. It has been already seen how, by making the glory of the blessed take this form of a Rose, which is also the emblem of Mary, the poet to some extent identifies her glory and triumph with that of the whole Church Triumphant. It has been well said that the poet has by this means impressed the form and name of the *Bel Fiore* upon all the saints of Paradise. The same writer (Capri in *Omaggio a Dante*) points out that the arrangement of this Rose of the blessed forms a kind of glorious mantle, sweeping down from where the Madonna is enthroned and embracing all the leaves of the sacred Flower: he regards it as based upon the text in the psalms, "The Queen stood on thy right hand in gilded clothing, surrounded with variety."

That Mary was the type of the universal Church was a doctrine usual with Catholic theologians. We seem, however, to have here at least a trace of a further piece of symbolism peculiar to Dante. The analogies between the earthly Rome and the celestial Rome are obvious, since the saints *in patria* are—

Senza fine civi
Di quella Roma onde Cristo è Romano,[1]

[1] For evermore citizens of that Rome of which Christ is Roman

and at every turn in the *Paradiso* such Roman references are obviously introduced. But, for Dante, Rome is not only the seat of the Church, but also of the Empire, and thus the great saints in the Empyrean are—

> i gran patrici
> Di questo imperio giustissimo e pio.[1]

Nor is it unintentional that the word *Augusta* should here be applied to Mary, as in Canto xxx. the title *augusto* to the soul of the Emperor Henry VII. This view, that Dante to the doctrine of his Church's theologians that makes the Blessed Virgin the type of the universal Church has added a peculiar symbolism of his own connected with the universal Empire, is strikingly confirmed by a well known and beautiful passage in Book IV of the *Convito*, where the poet strives to show that Rome was ordained by God to be the seat of the universal Empire:—

"The immeasurable Divine Goodness, wishing to bring back to Itself the human creature, which by the sin of the transgression of the first man had become separated from God and unlike Him, it was decreed in the most high and most united Divine Consistory of the Trinity, that the Son of God should descend to earth to bring about this reunion. And since at His coming into the world it behoved not only the heavens, but the earth, to be in the best condition, and the best condition of the earth is under a monarchy or one Prince, therefore Divine Providence ordained the people and the city wherein this should be fulfilled, that is, Rome the glorious. And because the hostelry which the celestia King was to enter should be most pure and most immaculate, a most holy race was ordained, of which, after many worthy

[1] The great patricians of this most just and pious Empire.

ones, was born a woman better than all the rest, who should be the chamber of the Son of God. And this race was that of David, from which was born the confidence (*baldezza*) and honour of humanity, that is, Mary..... And it was at one and the same time that David was born and that Rome was born; that is, that Æneas came from Troy into Italy, which was the origin of the most noble city of Rome. Thus the divine election of the Roman Empire is made very evident by the birth of the holy city, which was contemporaneous with that of the root from which sprang the race of Mary."[1]

Perhaps therefore, in this celestial Rome of eternal felicity and harmony, Dante would see in its most glorious Queen two types united, the Church and the Empire, the two ideals of his religious and political faith figured in Her who had taken pity upon him as he wandered lost and guideless in the dark wood, and who has been described by an illustrious Dante scholar as *la motrice di tutta la visione Dantesca.*

Indeed, throughout the final scene of the *Paradiso*, there are many reminiscences of the opening scene of the *Inferno.* Nearest to Mary, on the right and left, are Adam and St. Peter; beside them are Moses and St. John the Evangelist, and opposite sit St. Anne and St. Lucy: *Lucia che mosse la tua donna, Quando chinavi a ruinar le ciglia.*[2] Thus the three *donne benedette* of the second Canto of the *Inferno* have been at length seen in their glory, Beatrice seated with the ancient Rachel as Virgil had said. And just as, in Dante's farewell to Beatrice, the terrible experiences from which she delivered him are alluded to, so

[1] Miss K. Hillard's translation.

[2] Lucia who moved thy lady, when to rush downwards thou didst bend thy brows. *Par.* xxxii. 137.

the *nostra procella* of *Par.* xxxi. 30. recalls the *acqua perigliosa* of *Inf.* i. 24., the poet now praying God to succour those who are in the same plight as he was then. Thus also in the wonder of the barbarians at the splendour of Rome, and in the exquisite reference to the pilgrim from Croatia at the sight of the Veronica (*Par.* xxxi. 103—108), there are very likely reminiscences of the Jubilee which in Dante's poetic fiction, as perhaps in reality, was the epoch of his conversion to God, as allegorically signified in the first two cantos of the *Inferno*.

But the vision is drawing to a close, even as Dante's life was as he wrote, so let him finally turn to the contemplation of the *Primo Amore*, first asking grace from Mary,—

Grazia da quella che può aiutarti,[1]

and following St. Bernard's prayer with his heart. Again the words are, most fittingly, almost taken from the mouth of Bernard himself: "With all the tenderness of our hearts, with all the love of our inmost hearts, with all our vows and prayers, let us turn to Her."

The famous address of St. Bernard to the Blessed Virgin holds the same place of supremacy in poetry as does the Madonna di San Sisto among paintings. Setting forth at the outset the predestination of the Virgin Mother from Eternity to bring the Redeemer into the world, her office of love and hope to heaven and earth, her infinite excellence and dignity, her power and never failing love, St. Bernard implores of her grace for Dante to rise to the vision of the Divine Essence now, in ecstatic contemplation, and then for his final perseverance, that on his return to earth her loving protection may still follow him and strengthen him against the assaults of passion, until the *nube*

[1] Grace from Her who can aid thee.

di sua mortalità be finally dissipated and he rejoice once more in this supreme vision for all Eternity. The hymn might be taken terzina by terzina so as to show how Dante has made the doctrines of St. Bernard and other Catholic theologians live with a new life in his immortal song, but it is, after all, better comprehended, not with the aid of the cold light of dogma, but with the silent language and simple affection of the heart.

Vergine Madre, figlia del tuo Figlio,
Umile ed alta più che creatura,
Termine fisso d'eterno consiglio,
Tu se' colei che l'umana natura
Nobilitasti sì, che il suo Fattore
Non disdegnò di farsi sua fattura.
Nel ventre tuo si raccese l'amore,
Per lo cui caldo nell'eterna pace
Così è germinato questo fiore.
Qui sei a noi meridiana face
Di caritate, e giuso, intra i mortali,
Sei di speranza fontana vivace.
Donna, sei tanto grande e tanto vali,
Che qual vuol grazia ed a te non ricorre,
Sua disianza vuol volar senz'ali.
La tua benignità non pur soccorre
A chi domanda, ma molte fiate
Liberamente al domandar precorre.
In te misericordia, in te pietate,
In te magnificenza, in te s'aduna
Quantunque in creatura è di bontate.
Or questi, che dall'infima lacuna
Dell' universo infin qui ha vedute
Le vite spiritali ad una ad una,
Supplica a te, per grazia, di virtute
Tanto che possa con gli occhi levarsi
Più alto verso l'ultima salute.
Ed io, che mai per mio veder non arsi
Più ch'io fo per lo suo, tutti i miei preghi
Ti porgo, e prego che non sieno scarsi,

Perchè tu ogni nube gli disleghi
Di sua mortalità coi preghi tuoi,
Sì che il sommo piacer gli si dispieghi.
Ancor ti prego, Regina che puoi
Ciò che tu vuoli, che conservi sani,
Dopo tanto veder, gli affetti suoi.
Vinca tua guardia i movimenti umani;
Vedi Beatrice con quanti beati
Per li miei preghi ti chiudon le mani.

Par. xxxiii. 1.[1]

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[1] "Thou Virgin Mother, daughter of thy Son,
Humble and high beyond all other creature,
The limit fixed of the eternal counsel,
Thou art the one who such nobility
To human nature gave, that its Creator
Did not disdain to make Himself its creature.
Within thy womb rekindled was the love,
By heat of which in the eternal peace
After such wise this flower has germinated.
Here unto us thou art a noonday torch
Of charity, and below there among mortals
Thou art the living fountain-head of hope.
Lady, thou art so great and so prevailing,
That he who wishes grace, nor runs to thee,
His aspirations without wings would fly.
Not only thy benignity gives succour
To him who asketh it, but oftentimes
Forerunneth of its own accord the asking.
In thee compassion is, in thee is pity,
In thee magnificence; in thee unites
Whate'er of goodness is in any creature.
Now doth this man, who from the lowest depth
Of the universe as far as here has seen
One after one the spiritual lives,
Supplicate thee through grace for so much power
That with his eyes he may uplift himself
Higher towards the uttermost salvation.
And I, who never burned for my own seeing
More than I do for his, all of my prayers
Proffer to thee, and pray they come not short,

Mary accepts the prayer, and turns her eyes to the Eternal Light in intercession. And, in response to that intercession, the vision of the Divine Essence, in which consists the last and perfect happiness of the human intellect, is gradually vouchsafed to Dante. Now that he is approaching this end of all desires, of a necessity the very ardour of desire must die away within him; for the end of all desires is that Universal Good which sets the will of man to rest, and that Universal Truth which completely satisfies the intellect. Happiness is perfect good which entirely appeases desire; otherwise it would not be the last end, if something still remained to be desired. When man has gained his last end he remains at peace with his desires at rest. His sight becoming pure enters more and more by infused grace into the Light Divine, which is Truth in its Essence, and of which the light of man's reason at its highest is but a faint reflected ray. But neither speech nor memory can follow this vision, which grace has granted beyond the natural powers of man. Though the vision was but as a transitory dream, yet something of the joy, the sweetness of divine love which is consequent upon the act of vision, still remains in the poet's heart; and he implores grace from the Supreme Light that he may leave the world some faint notion of what he saw, not now to gain the poet's crown,

---

That thou wouldst scatter from him every cloud
Of his mortality so with thy prayers,
That the Chief Pleasure be to him displayed.
Still farther do I pray thee, Queen, who canst
Whate'er thou wilt, that sound thou mayst preserve
After so great a vision his affections.
Let thy protection conquer human movements;
See Beatrice and all the blessed ones
My prayers to second clasp their hands to thee!"

LONGFELLOW.

nor for any hope of fame or reward, but solely for the benefit of his fellow men and the greater glory of God:—

O somma Luce, che tanto ti levi
Dai concetti mortali, alla mia mente
Ripresta un poco di quel che parevi
E fa' la lingua mia tanto possente,
Ch'una favilla sol della tua gloria
Possa lasciare alla futura gente;
Chè, per tornare alquanto a mia memoria,
E per sonare un poco in questi versi,
Più si conceperà di tua vittoria.[1]

Uniting his intellectual vision to the Divine Essence, it becomes (in the phrase of St. Thomas) the *intelligible form* of the intellect, and in that divine light he sees all that a spirit may see by this immediate intuition,—

Tanto, che la veduta vi consunsi.[2]

In it he sees the *exemplar*, the type of all creation,—all created substances with their qualities, their different modes of being, their functions; and how they are all bound up into the beauty and wonder of God's Universe, the form that makes that Universe like to Him: the whole bound with love into one ineffable golden volume.

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[1] O Light Supreme, that dost so far uplift thee
From the conceits of mortals, to my mind
Of what thou didst appear re-lend a little,
And make my tongue of so great puissance,
That but a single sparkle of thy glory
It may bequeath unto the future people;
For by returning to my memory somewhat,
And by a little sounding in these verses,
More of thy victory shall be conceived!
LONGFELLOW.

[2] "So that the seeing I consumed therein," that is, so that I saw all that I could see therein.

Nel suo profondo vidi che s'interna,
Legato con amore in un volume,
Ciò che per l'universo si squaderna;
Sustanzia ed accidente, e lor costume,
Tutti conflati insieme per tal modo,
Che ciò ch'io dico è un semplice lume.
La forma universal di questo nodo,
Credo ch'io vidi, perchè più di largo,
Dicendo questo, mi sento ch'io godo.[1]

Sustanzia ed accidente e lor costume, that is, everything conceivable by thought as capable of existence in itself (substance) or only in something else as a mode of being (accident); *e lor costume*, apparently the properties and mutual relations of all created things.

Immovable in his vision, the intensity of contemplation increases. The poet's mind and will are completely absorbed in contemplation and love of the Supreme Good. "When the soul," says Richard of St. Victor, "has begun through pure understanding to pass out of itself, and entirely to enter into that brightness of incorporeal light, and to draw some taste of the intimate sweetness that it sees in Its depths, then indeed in this excess of the mind that peace is found and obtained which is without disturbance or fear, and there is silence in heaven, as it were for half an hour, so that the soul of the contemplative may be disturbed by no tumult of discordant thoughts" (*De Exterminatione Mali.* iii. 18.)

[1] I saw that in its depth far down is lying
Bound up with love together in one volume,
What through the universe in leaves is scattered;
Substance, and accident, and their operations,
All interfused together in such wise
That what I speak of is one simple light.
The universal fashion of this knot
Methinks I saw, since more abundantly
In saying this I feel that I rejoice.
LONGFELLOW.

A quella luce cotal si diventa,
Che volgersi da lei per altro aspetto
È impossibil che mai si consenta:
Però che il ben, ch'è del volere obbietto,
Tutto s'accoglie in lei, e fuor di quella
E difettivo ciò che lì è perfetto.[1]

"The perfect happiness of man consists in the vision of the Divine Essence. Now it is impossible that any one seeing the Divine Essence should wish not to see it: because every good gift which one is willing to go without, is either insufficient, so that something else more sufficing is sought in its place, or has some inconvenience annexed to it, whereby it comes to excite disgust. But the vision of the Divine Essence fills the soul with all good things, since it unites to it the Source of all good" (St. Thomas. I—2. 5. 4. *Aquinas Ethicus*). Thus, of his own free will, no one will forsake this perfect happiness, nor can he who enjoys it fall into any fault, since rectitude of will necessarily follows upon the vision of the Essence of God.

But there is yet a further progression. In the Divine Essence Dante has seen the type of creation, now he must behold the Creator. There is no change whatever in the light upon which he is gazing, only, as he gazes, his own power of intellectual sight is supernaturally enlarged; the divine light seems to his sight to grow more manifest, because that sight itself has changed by increased virtue:—

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[1] In presence of that light one such becomes,
That to withdraw therefrom for other prospect
It is impossible he e'er consent;
Because the good, which object is of will,
Is gathered all in this, and out of it
That is defective which is perfect there.
LONGFELLOW.

Non perchè più ch'un semplice sembiante
Fosse nel vivo lume ch'io mirava,
Che tal è sempre qual era davante;
Ma per la vista che s'avvalorava
In me, guardando, una sola parvenza,
Mutandom' io, a me si travagliava.[1]

He beholds therefore the mystery of the most Blessed Trinity, and how the Divine Nature is united to the Human in the Person of the Word. In the profound and clear subsistence of the Supreme Light (one substance—unity in Essence), appeared to him three circles of three colours (distinctness in the Persons) and of one dimension (*una continenza*—equality in the Majesty). And one seemed reflected from the other, and the third like flame proceeded equally from both the reflecting and the reflected. Similarly the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity are indicated in his last ejaculation to the Light Eternal:—

O luce eterna, che sola in te sidi,
Sola t'intendi, e, da te intelletta
Ed intendente, te ami ed arridi![2]

The circle which appeared as reflected showed within itself the human form—*del suo colore stesso mi parve pinta*

---

[1] Not because more than one unmingled semblance
Was in the living light on which I looked,
For it is always what it was before;
But through the light, that fortified itself
In me by looking, one appearance only
To me was ever changing as I changed.
LONGFELLOW.

[2] O Light Eternal, sole in thyself that dwellest,
Sole knowest thyself, and, known unto thyself
And knowing, lovest and smilest on thyself!
Ibid.

della nostra effige,[1] of the same divine colour because, in the union of the Divine Nature with the Human Nature in Christ, both remain complete in the unity of the Person of the Word Divine. Then as finally the poet strives to comprehend yet more of the mystery of the Divinity, how and why human nature is united to the Word, a sudden ray of divine light penetrates his mind, enabling him to see as much of so inscrutable a mystery as can be permitted to any created intellect even in the Beatific Vision.

Ma non eran da ciò le proprie penne,
Se non che la mia mente fu percossa
Da un fulgore, in che sua voglia venne.
All'alta fantasia qui mancò possa;
Ma già volgeva il mio disiro e il velle,
Sì come ruota ch'egualmente è mossa,
L'Amor che muove il sole e l'altre stelle.[2]

Thus then the vision ceases, to be renewed the second and final time that Dante is to ascend the stairway of the Eternal Palace, ceases with the poet's desire and will moving in perfect harmony with the will of God. He is united to God by charity, to God who is the ultimate end of the human mind, and thus his mind has attained its perfection: for, *unumquodque dicitur esse perfectum, inquantum attingit proprium finem, qui est ultima rei per-*

[1] Of its own very colour it appeared to me painted with our likeness.

[2] But my own wings were not enough for this,
Had it not been that then my mind there smote
A flash of lightning, wherein came its wish.
Here vigour failed the lofty fantasy:
But now was turning my desire and will,
Even as a wheel that equally is moved,
The Love which moves the sun and the other stars.
LONGFELLOW.

fectio, "each thing is said to be perfect inasmuch as it attains to its proper end, which is the ultimate perfection of the thing." The perfection attained to in the close of the vision is the perfection which St. Thomas describes as absolute on the part of the person loving, in that the whole power of his affection is ever absolutely fixed upon God; but this is a perfection that is only possible in the *essential* or *literal* Paradise. Therefore the perfection of charity to which Dante has actually attained to in his poem is that which is possible to have in this life, in the *allegorical* or *moral* Paradise,—the charity which excludes from the heart not only all that is contrary to charity, but also all that hinders the entire concentration of the heart upon God (*Summa* ii—2. 184. 2). It is a glorious foretaste upon earth of the Beatific Vision in Paradise. "To that Beatific Vision," so Benvenuto da Imola piously concludes his commentary, "May. He bring us all *in patria*, who deigned to bring this most fortunate author thereto *in via;* to whom is honour, glory and perpetuity, for ever and ever, Amen.

Deo Gratias.

Chapter VII.

DANTE'S LETTERS.

Such were his words. It is indeed
For ever well our singers should
Utter good words and know them good
Not through song only; with close heed
Lest, having spent for the work's sake
Six days, the man be left to make.

Rossetti, *Dante at Verona.*

In this age of destructive and sceptical criticism, it is growing dangerous to speak of any of the letters ascribed to the divine poet as having really come from his pen. That Dante did indeed write many letters, and that these were noble in tone, eloquent in diction and eminently characteristic of the man, we know from the testimony of Dante's contemporary, the Florentine chronicler Giovanni Villani, and from that of his earliest biographers, Boccaccio and Leonardo Bruni, who had before their eyes letters which have not come down to us and of which they sometimes give us very tantalizing hints in the way of fragments. Regret for the very scanty knowledge that we have of Dante's correspondence is heightened by the character of the little that is still left us, and by comparison of its minute quantity with what remains in this kind from Dante's successor Petrarch. In striking contrast to the immense mass of

epistles in verse and prose, in which Petrarch reveals so much of his own personality and admits us into his surroundings and the life of his times, there are only sixteen letters that have ever been even indirectly ascribed to Dante, besides one or two doubtful passages from others; and, of these sixteen, only eight admit of serious discussion, whilst the authenticity of only two or three can really be regarded as approaching to anything like complete freedom from suspicion.

The starting point of all study in this matter is the following well known passage in Villani's Chronicle where he speaks briefly of the life and works of his exiled fellow citizen and neighbour Dante Alighieri, on the occasion of the latter's death:—

"He wrote amongst others three noble letters. One of these he sent to the rulers of Florence, complaining of his unjust exile. Another he sent to the Emperor Henry when he was besieging Brescia, rebuking him for his delay in almost prophetical language. The third was to the Italian Cardinals, during the vacancy after the death of Pope Clement, urging them to unite in electing an Italian Pope. All were in Latin with lofty diction and with excellent sentences and authorities, which were much commended by the wise and understanding."

The Florentine poet, Antonio Pucci, in his *Centiloquio*, a kind of poetical paraphrase of Villani's Chronicle, writes in a similar strain of Dante's letters, which he seems to erroneously suppose to have been written in Italian:—

Poi tre Pistole fece copiose
Pure in volgar, con tanto intendimento,
Che forse mai non fur sì belle prose.

L'una mandò in Firenze al Reggimento,
Mostrando ch'era senza colpa fuore
Di casa sua, facendone lamento.
L'altra mandò ad Arrigo Imperatore,
Essendo a Brescia, quasi profetando,
Che la sua stanza non era il migliore.
E poi la terza, la Chiesa vacando,
Mandò a' Cardinali italiani,
Di Papa italian tutti pregando.
Le qua' venendo alle discrete mani,
Fur commendate assai, se ben discerno,
Da que' che avevan gl'intelletti sani.[1]

Of these *tre nobili pistole*, which Villani names, there was up to the end of last century only known an Italian translation of the letter to the Emperor. In addition there existed an Italian version of a very similar production, not mentioned by Villani, written on the same occasion, but slightly earlier: "To all and each of the kings of Italy and senators of the blessed City, as also the dukes, marquises, counts and people of the same, the humble Italian Dante Alighieri, Florentine and unjustly exiled, prayeth peace": that is, urges submission to Henry. It is generally known simply as the Letter to the Princes and People of Italy. There was likewise the Latin text of that famous Epistle to Can Grande della Scala, dedicating the first part of the

[1] It would be needless to add a translation as Pucci's lines are merely a paraphrase of the passage already quoted from Villani. Antonio Pucci was born at the beginning of the 14th century and was still living in 1373, when he abruptly ends his *Centiloquio* by declaring himself (in a sonnet) as too old and weary to proceed. In his 55th Canto he treats of Dante, following in the main Villani, but adding a vision of his own in which the seven sciences are weeping over the poet's bier. Pucci is decisive upon Dante having been at one part of his career a Guelph:—

Ed era Guelfo e non fu Ghibellino.

Paradiso to him, and furnishing a most interesting commentary upon its first Canto. As we have already seen, this letter had been ascribed to Dante from the time that Filippo Villani, the nephew of the great chronicler and the successor to Boccaccio in his professorship at Florence, had lectured upon the Divine Comedy towards the end of the fourteenth century; but the question of its authenticity is one of the most difficult problems in the study of Dante's works. Moreover there were extant, and had been first published in 1719, the two Latin Eclogues, two charming pastoral letters written in hexameters, to Giovanni del Virgilio, which, although not mentioned by Giovanni Villani in the list of Dante's writings that he gives us in the Chronicle, were well known to Boccaccio. Then, during the first half of the present century, others came to light. The famous Letter to a Florentine Friend, full of burning indignation and indignant refusal of the proffered amnesty with its degrading conditions, was discovered: "This is not the way to return to my country, Father. If by no honourable way an entrance can be found into Florence, therein will I never enter. Can I not from any corner of the earth behold the sun and the stars?" Then followed the original Latin text of the three letters mentioned by Villani, and others too, more or less doubtful, until the first complete edition of the Epistles of Dante published in 1842, exclusive of the two Eclogues, contained fourteen. But in the course of time these letters have been taken away from us again, one by one, and the delicate fabric of their authenticity powdered to atoms beneath the sledge-hammer blows of more modern critics. Upon the whole, this is a very satisfactory result. We can well spare that odd letter to Moroello Malaspina with its queer confidence of a not very inspiring love intrigue; that preposterous account of an altogether impossible embassy to the Venetians on behalf of Guido da Polenta,

the lord of Ravenna, will certainly not be missed; and even the letter to the poet Cino da Pistoia, full of warm friendship and consolation from one noble exile to another, and discussing the question of how one passion replaces another in the heart of man, can be abandoned without much regret. But of late grave doubts have been thrown even upon the letter refusing to enter Florence upon shameful conditions, that letter which has been called Dante's *Apologia pro vita sua*, that splendid utterance of the *alma sdegnosa* which all readers of English poetry know and love in Dante Rossetti's paraphrase:—

> This Dante writ in answer thus,
> Words such as these: "That clearly they
> In Florence must not have to say,—
> The man abode aloof from us
> Nigh fifteen years, yet lastly skulk'd
> Hither to candleshrift and mulct.
>
> "That he was one the Heavens forbid
> To traffic in God's justice sold
> By market-weight of earthly gold,
> Or to bow down over the lid
> Of steaming censers, and so be
> Made clean of manhood's obloquy.
>
> "That since no gate led, by God's will,
> To Florence, but the one whereat
> The priests and money-changers sat,
> He still would wander; for that still,
> Even through the body's prison-bars,
> His soul possessed the sun and stars."

Yet the difficulties which prevent its being accepted as genuine seem almost unsurmountable, and it now stands under strong suspicion of being a mere fabrication upon the basis of Boccaccio's narrative.

We are thus left with seven letters; the Epistle to the

Princes and People of Italy, the Epistle to the Florentines and that to the Emperor Henry VII (all three written in 1311, the first year of the Emperor's Italian expedition); the Epistle to the Italian Cardinals (probably written in 1314); the rather doubtful Letter to Can Grande della Scala (1318 or 1319); and the two Eclogues to Giovanni del Virgilio, which were clearly produced between 1319 and 1321, the year of Dante's death. The genuineness of the Epistle to the Emperor is alone practically undisputed. The letter to Can Grande has always been doubtful, and it is now suggested that there is not sufficient evidence to support the authenticity of the Eclogues and the letter to the Princes and People, and that the two other letters which seem to correspond with Villani's statement may in reality be mere forgeries, cleverly constructed upon the basis of his Chronicle to supply the want occasioned by that very statement. Nevertheless, whatever may be held concerning the letter to the young lord of Verona, there can really be very little doubt about the two Eclogues, and the probability in favour of the authenticity of the other three epistles is so strong as practically to amount to certitude.

It will thus be seen that Dante's genuine letters—or those that we shall venture to regard as genuine—fall into three classes, which correspond to their chronological order of production. First come four letters in prose, dealing with the two burning political questions of his times; upon these follows a composition which is practically a philosophical and critical treatise assuming the epistolary form; and finally, in the strongest possible contrast to these, are the two pastoral Eclogues, addressed in a half playful tone to the young Bolognese scholar. In some respects it is a happy circumstance that these should be the sole remnants left to us of Dante's correspondence; for they treat of no trivial or unworthy matters, but give us a certain represen-a-

tion of the man and of his life-work. The first group deals with the two chosen ideals of his heart, at definite moments when they seemed about to be actually effected and become living realities for Italy and for Christendom, the restoration of the Empire and the purification of the Church. The poet's spirit is bitter within him as he writes these letters. The moment passed away, and the ideals faded out of the regions of practical politics and possible fulfilment. He turns now to another line of action, and, in the next letter, we find him interpreting his own great poem, the immortal work in which Dante strove to do for man what Emperor and Pope had failed to accomplish—"to remove those living in this life from their state of misery and to lead them to the state of felicity." Then lastly, when the great work of his life was drawing to a close, the Eclogues give us a bright and almost peaceful picture of his latest days, when most of the bitterness had passed away, and show how much calmer Dante's fierce spirit became towards the end of his life.

A mediæval Latin letter is, even at its best, a somewhat laboured and disappointing affair. The four letters of the first group are practically four glorified political pamphlets, on Henry VII's romantic invasion of Italy to reassert the decadent power of the Holy Roman Empire, and on the Babylonian captivity of the Popes at Avignon. In each letter Dante's burning passion and intense enthusiasm is manifest; they are full of his yearning for return to Florence and his indignation at the injustice which he and others have met with, of his ardent hopes for Italy and for Rome, his worship of the Empire, his devotion to the Church. "Not by the grace of riches," he cries in one, "but by the grace of God, I am what I am; and 'the zeal of His house hath eaten me up'." But, in the somewhat barbarous and frequently obscure language that he adopts, Dante seems

ever, as it were, a captive in an unknown land; that mighty spirit is ever striving to burst asunder the fetters of clumsy mediæval Latin that bind him, and to soar aloft into the pure ether of Italian poetry. If only Dante had written his letters in simple Italian prose, as in his own *Vita Nuova* and *Convito*, or as St. Catharine of Siena wrote her letters not many years later, these four compositions would have been priceless treasures indeed. Even in their present form there are occasionally passages full of the spirit of true and stirring poetry, though frequently merely echoed from the Vulgate. It is with the exultation of an oppressed patriot in the approach of a longed-for revolution that the first letter opens:—

"Lo, now is the acceptable time in which the signs of consolation and of peace are rising. The dawn of a new day shineth, before which the darkness of long calamity is passing away. Already a quickening breeze doth blow from the orient; on the horizon the sky is blushing red, filling the people with joyful expectation. We too shall see the looked-for joy, who have long passed the night in the desert; for the Sun of Peace will arise and Justice will revive in his dawn. All that hunger and thirst will be filled in the light of his rays, and they that love iniquity will be confounded at the face of his brightness. The strong lion of the tribe of Juda hath mercifully hearkened, and, taking pity upon the wail of universal captivity, hath raised up another Moses who will deliver his people from the burdens of the Egyptians and lead them into a land flowing with milk and honey. Rejoice then, Italy, for thy spouse, the consolation of the world and glory of thy people, the most clement Henry, Augustus and Cæsar, is hastening to the nuptials. Dry thy tears and put away the signs of mourning, O most beautiful one; for he is near who will deliver thee."

Dante had hastened back to Italy from Paris, to exult in the coming triumph of the cause and in the anticipation of his own return to Florence. It was in the seeming glory of this new day that he walked as he composed the three letters;—to the Princes and People of Italy, urging them to arise and go forth to meet the King that God had given them and that Peter had blessed; to the Florentines, no longer craving permission to return, but taunting them with their coming destruction and fiercely exulting in their supposed inability to withstand the imperial arms; and lastly to the Emperor himself, urging him to advance without delay. They throw a vivid light upon this chapter in Italian history, and make us realise what the failure of Henry's enterprise meant to such Italians as Dante. They are full of his favourite arguments for the divinely instituted Roman Empire, sanctioned by Christ Himself at His Birth and Passion; his cherished ideals of Cæsar and Peter, their power bifurcating from God as from a single point, gain new force now that they seem at last to have entered into the field of practical politics. Reason and Authority seem now like avenging angels hovering over the imperial host and pointing the way to Rome, already chanting the song of victory. Curio is no longer a sower of sedition, as in the *Inferno*, but an enlightened patriot for urging Cæsar on against the Republic. The golden bird of God, the sacrosanct sign of the Empire, has started again upon its triumphant course, irresistible in might; all Italy shall hear the thunder of those outspread wings as it sweeps on towards the eternal City, and Florence shall surely feel its beak and claws on the way. Let the minister of God, the son of the Church, the promoter of Roman glory, delay no longer in Lombardy when all the earth is awaiting him, but let him march onwards and smite the accursed city of Florence, from whence proceeds all the opposition to the imperial majesty.

Yet a cloud of doubt seems hanging over this last letter and already threatening to obscure the sunrise; already his first eager cry, "Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sins of the world," has yielded to a half doubtful repetition of the words of the Precursor: "Art thou he that art to come, or look we for another?" Still it is in accents of hope that the third letter ends, as the first had begun,—of hope, both personal and national:—

"Delay no longer, great child of Isai. Take confidence from the Lord God of Hosts in whose sight thou dost act, and lay low this Goliath with the sling of thy wisdom and the stone of thy power; for, in his fall, night and the shadow of fear will cover the camp of the Philistines, they will fly and Israel be liberated. Then will our stolen heritage, for which we have incessantly grieved, be entirely restored to us. And whereas now, like exiles in Babylon, we weep when we remember sweet Jerusalem, so then, as citizens and breathing in peace, we shall recollect in joy the miseries of confusion."

But the dawn was delusive; the day was brief, and, when the sun sank all too soon, the night set dark and stormily. Within the third year Henry of Luxemburg was dead, and Dante once more a homeless fugitive with a renewed sentence of death upon his head. A mystery surrounds this portion of his life. It was on April 16th, 1311, that he had directed the letter to Henry from "Tuscany near the sources of the Arno", presumably from some castle in the Casentino, and nothing is known with any certainty of what became of Dante in the downfall of the imperial cause, until he appears at Ravenna towards the close of his days. In the interval he may have been with Uguccione della Faggiuola, and perhaps again with Can Grande della Scala; he is supposed

to have visited Pisa and Lucca; but it is also possible, even probable, that in his first bitterness of despair he retired for a time into that lonely Apennine monastery, Santa Croce di Fonte Avellana, and thence gazed forth upon a desolate world. There is a well known reference to this convent in Canto xxi. of the *Paradiso*, with that yearning look towards Florence from which he was now more than ever shut out:—

> Tra due liti d'Italia surgon sassi,
> E non molto distanti alla tua patria,
> Tanto che i tuoni assai suonan più bassi,
> E fanno un gibbo che si chiama Catria,
> Di sotto al quale è consecrato un ermo,
> Che suol esser disposto a sola latria.
>
> *Par.* xxi. 106.[1]

It may have been from this watch-tower of contemplation that Dante saw the death of Pope Clement V in 1314. A long vacancy of the papal chair followed. Very early in this interregnum Dante again seized his pen and wrote the letter to the Italian Cardinals, who, with others of the sacred College, were assembled in conclave at Carpentras in Provence. The ideal Emperor, the subject of his former epistles, had lamentably failed in his attempt to heal the wounds of Italy before she was ready: might not deliverance now come from an ideal Pope, if such a one could be found,

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[1] Between two shores of Italy rise cliffs,
And not far distant from thy native place,
So high, the thunders far below them sound,
And form a ridge that Catria is called,
'Neath which is consecrate a hermitage
Wont to be dedicate to worship only.
LONGFELLOW.

Some writers put Dante's visit to the monastery at a later date, and one or two deny that he ever was there.

an Italian, who would return to Rome and so restore one of her luminaries to the Eternal City? At present the whole world seemed to Dante as in his youth Florence had been after the death of Beatrice, widowed and despoiled of all dignity: *quasi vedova e dispogliata di ogni dignitade.* Then, as he tells us in the *Vita Nuova*, he had written to the chief persons of the city—*ai principi della terra*—a letter touching somewhat upon its condition and beginning with certain solemn words of Jeremias. The same words rose to the poet's memory now that Rome lay similarly widowed and despoiled, for not only was the imperial throne empty, but the spiritual guide of the *De Monarchia*, the allegorical Beatrice, seemed dead, or at least hidden for a time in the darkness and corruption of Avignon; and, taking them as text, he wrote to the "chief centurions of the Church Militant", to the Italian Cardinals, a most noble letter:

"*Quomodo sedet sola civitas plena populo; facta est quasi vidua domina gentium.* When the cupidity of the Pharisees disgraced the priesthood of the old law and brought ruin upon the chosen city of David, God inspired the godlike mind of a prophet to weep again and again in these words for holy Jerusalem. Now we, for whose salvation Peter was bidden to feed the holy sheepfold, we with Jeremias, not in mere imitation but with the same grief, are forced to mourn for Rome widowed and deserted—for Rome to whom, after the splendour of so many triumphs, Christ by word and work confirmed the Empire of the world, and which Peter and Paul consecrated as the apostolic seat by the sprinkling of their own blood.

"The impious mock at our Sabbaths, and false prophets declare that your wilful choice of evil was inevitable. You, the chief centurions of the Church Militant, have neglected to guide the chariot of the Spouse along the manifest path

of the Crucified, and have dragged it out of the track like the false charioteer Phaethon. You should have illuminated the flock following you through the forest pastures of this peregrination, but you have drawn it with yourselves to the brink of the precipice. You have turned your faces away from the chariot of the Bride, like the men that were shown to Ezekiel with their backs to the temple of the Lord. Ye despise the fire sent from heaven, where the altars smoke with strange fire which was not commanded; ye sell doves in the temple and traffic in sacred things. But beware of the scourge of little cords, beware of the fire from the Lord that destroyed Nadab and Abiu, and do not tempt the patience of God who awaits your repentance. Ye have been parties in the sin of Alcimus with Demetrius.[1]

"Perchance you will indignantly ask, who is this man that in spite of the fate of Oza dares to put forth his hand to the ark, as though it were falling? Verily, of the sheep of Jesus Christ's pastures I am one of the least; I abuse no pastoral authority, for I have no riches. Not then by the grace of riches, but by the grace of God I am what I am, and 'the zeal of His house hath eaten me up.' Of old the divine praises sounded from the mouths of sucklings and infants, and the man born blind confessed the truth in spite of the Pharisees. Nor can any one reproach me with the guilty presumption of Oza; for he put his hand to the ark, but I only attend to the oxen that are kicking and

[1] *In Alcimum cum Demetrio consensistis.* Alcimus is Clement V; Demetrius, Philip the Fair. "And Demetrius sat upon the throne of his kingdom, and there came to him the wicked and ungodly men of Israel; and Alcimus was at the head of them, who desired to be made high priest ... and the wicked Alcimus he made high priest and he commanded him to take revenge upon the children of Israel" (I *Machabees* 7.). Dante similarly finds types of Pope Clement and King Philip in *Machabees* II in the persons of Jason and Antiochus (*Inf.* xix.).

dragging it away from the right path. May He help the ark, who opened His saving eyes upon the tossing ship.

"Are ye not ashamed that, out of so many false shepherds and so many neglected sheep, only one faithful voice should be heard in this death of Mother Church, and that of a private person? Each one, even as you have done, has taken to wife covetousness, she who is never the mother of piety and justice, as charity, but ever of impiety and iniquity.[1] The lives of the clergy make manifest the result; almost all are veritable children of the daughters of the horse-leech. The great Doctors are thrown aside and only the writers of decretals studied; for those sought God as their supreme end, but these get livings and benefices. And do not flatter yourselves, fathers, that I stand alone in this and that the rest of the faithful will always endure it in silence nor render testimony to their Maker. The Lord liveth, and He who moved the tongue of Balaam's ass is the Lord also of modern brutes.

"May shame induce repentance and amendment. And in order that this amendment may be effectual and permanent, restore Rome from what she now is, deprived of both her luminaries, sitting widowed and alone, to that ideal city of Rome which we have conceived in our minds. I speak above all to you who as children knew the sacred Tiber. For although the Latian Capital is to be piously loved by all Italians, ye above all are bound to worship her who are Romans by birth. If the misery of this present time fills all Italians with grief and shame, still more should ye blush and mourn who were the cause of this her eclipse. It will indeed be amendment, although a shameful scar will be left branded upon the apostolic see, if all ye who were the cause

[1] Cf. *Inf.* I. 100 where Dante says of the *Lupa* —

Molti son gli animali, a cui si ammoglia.

of this wandering from the path, unanimously and manfully do battle for the Spouse of Christ, for the seat of the Spouse which is Rome, for our Italy, and indeed for the whole community of voyagers on earth. Enter gloriously upon the conflict which has already begun and upon which all eyes are fixed, so that ye may hear the *Gloria in excelsis* resound, and the disgrace of the Gascons, who lusted to usurp for themselves the glory of the Italians, may stand as an example to posterity throughout all future ages."

The powerful and eloquent composition, of which the above is partly a paraphrase and partly an abridgment, has certainly more claims to the title of Dante's *Apologia pro vita sua* than has the far more doubtful letter containing the refusal of the amnesty. One of its passages was afterwards quoted by Petrarch in his famous Canzone to Cola di Rienzo. It is complementary to the *De Monarchia* and Dante's writings on behalf of the Empire. The supposed Ghibelline, who had striven so ardently with his pen for the inviolable eternal Rome of the successor of Cæsar, is now found breaking a lance for the no less sacred Rome divinely established as seat of the successor of Peter—

U'siede il successor del maggior Piero:

as the poet had sung in the second Canto of the *Inferno*. It completes the ideal Rome of Dante's conception (as he himself implies): Rome the seat of Pope and Emperor, of man's spiritual and temporal guides alike, from whom as from two suns both paths, the earthly and the heavenly, shall be illuminated for mankind,—in short, the ideal set forth in so many passages of the Divine Comedy. Dante's own attitude towards the Church and her rulers finds the clearest expression here, that Church which he loved more

intensely and with almost fiercer devotion, as he saw her spotted with corruption and disgraced by the lives and conduct of those who sat in her highest places. It is not the ark, but the unruly oxen, with which he concerns himself; but it must be admitted that the hand he puts out to steady them contains a stinging whip for their correction, and he is fond of lashing those labouring oxen even to excess!

There is a famous episode in the *Paradiso* which, with its probable allegorical significance noted to some extent by Benvenuto da Imola, should be set side by side with this letter. It occurs just after the description of the monastery of Santa Croce at the end of Canto xxi. and beginning of Canto xxii. In the seventh Heaven St. Peter Damian has rebuked the luxurious lives of the Cardinals and prelates—

O pazienza, che tanto sostieni!

"O patience of God to endure so much!" The other contemplative spirits join with him in invoking the Divine vengeance upon such unworthy pastors, and their cry is like thunder, stupefying Dante with its terrible sound, for these spirits are united with the angelic order that moves this seventh Heaven, the Thrones, the very mirrors of the terrible judgments of God. It is doubtless the same thought as here in this letter: "Beware of the scourge, beware of the fire from heaven, and tempt not the patience of God." Oppressed with terror at the outcry of these saints against the vices of the pastors of the Church, Dante turns to his guide Beatrice as a child to its mother, and she reassures him. Taking Beatrice as representing both Theology and the ideal spiritual guide of the *De Monarchia*, the allegorical meaning apparently is that, himself seeing the wickedness and corruption of the Popes and prelates, reading too in the writings of Peter Damian of even worse things in his time, and

finding these scandals confirmed in the books of so many other holy writers, Dante was assailed with doubts as to the truth of the faith that he held, but yielded his own judgment to the authority and theological teaching of the Church. Benvenuto, who calls this "a pleasing fiction of our author" and regards Beatrice as a symbol of Theology or of the Holy Scripture, gives a somewhat analogous interpretation:

"This is a pleasing fiction of our author, for verily the mind of every wise man is often much stupefied when he considers what holy doctors have said concerning the vices of prelates; and it seems a wonderful and horrible thing that God, who rules all, governs justly, and only wills what is good, should tolerate such deeds. Nevertheless in this perturbation of mind he has recourse to Beatrice, that is to Holy Scripture, which demonstrates to him how God in His providence permits these things for many causes, although man cannot see all; for often, on account of the sins of the subjects, He permits bad pastors and hypocrites to rule."

Besides throwing light upon several minor points in the Divine Comedy, this letter to the Cardinals very clearly shows Dante's own position in the ranks of the Prophets. He would regard himself as the Jeremias of the new law, and claims to take the same stand for Rome as Jeremias did for Jerusalem, now that the seventy years' slavery to the King of Babylon was to be repeated in the seventy years' practical subjection of the Papacy to the French at Avignon. There is a distinct analogy between the letter from Dante in Italy to the Cardinals at Carpentras and the letter which Jeremias sent from Jerusalem to the captives in Babylon, in spite of the strongly contrasted contents and the different objects that the two writers had in view.

Almost at the opening of each there comes the solemn warning against false prophets: "Let not your prophets that are in the midst of you and your diviners deceive you. For they prophesy falsely to you in my name: and I have not sent them, saith the Lord" (Jer. xxix. Vulgate). Much of the first Canto of the *Divina Commedia* is based upon the prophecies of Jeremias, or at least offers analogous features. The slumber from which Dante has awakened, the mountain at whose foot he has arrived, have their prototypes in Jer. xxxi—"the beauty of justice, the holy mountain" and "I was, as it were, awaked out of a sleep and I saw" (verses 23 and 26); although, but for the Divine Mercy and the three gracious Ladies that aroused him, Dante's slumber would have rather resembled the everlasting sleep of the sinner (Jer. li. 39), and his attempt to ascend the mountain, repulsed by the three beasts, is a practical illustration of the words of the Psalmist: "Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord, or who shall stand in his holy place? The innocent in hands and clean of heart." For the poet was not yet one of these. Those three beasts that drive him back are clearly derived from the fifth chapter of Jeremias, "A lion out of the wood hath slain them, a wolf in the evening hath spoiled them, a leopard watcheth for their cities": a derivation which makes it difficult to accept unreservedly the ordinary interpretation of these beasts as luxury, pride and avarice, in spite of the almost universal testimony of Dante's earliest commentators.[1] Possibly the

[1] Dr. Scartazzini regards them as representing incredulity, pride, and false doctrine, but other passages in the Divine Comedy certainly justify the more usual interpretation of the leopard and the wolf. Savonarola in his *trattato* on the government of Florence shows that if a tyrant has pride, luxury and avarice, he has virtually all the sins of the world. The Flesh, the World and the Devil, is also an interpretation supported by an early commentator. It is needless to say that until the end of

same chapter afforded the germ of Cacciaguida's injunction to his descendant in *Paradiso* xvii.: "I will go therefore to the great men and will speak to them" (Jer. v. 5). Dante likewise is to address himself mainly to those in high places and to exemplify his teaching from the fate of famous souls, *l'anime che son di fama note*:—

> Questo tuo grido farà come vento,
> Che le più alte cime più percuote;
> E ciò non fa d'onor poco argomento.[1]
> *Par.* xvii. 133.

So too, again and again, does Dante sternly and bitterly repeat in other words the Prophet's text (Jer. xxiii. 15), "From the prophets of Jerusalem corruption is gone forth into all the land":—

> Chè la vostra avarizia il mondo attrista,

"Because your avarice afflicts the world" (*Inf.* xix.). The full significance of the symbolical episode of the Harlot and the Giant in Canto xxxii. of the *Purgatorio* is seen by comparing it both with the Apocalypse of St. John and the prophecy of Jeremias.

The influence upon Dante of his Hebrew prototype is strongly marked in Canto xxvii. of the *Paradiso*. Indeed

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last century no one imagined that the three beasts stood for Florence, France and Rome, although some germs of such an interpretation may be found in Benvenuto's connecting the wolf with the avarice of the prelates of the Church.

[1] This cry of thine shall do as doth the wind,
Which smiteth most the most exalted summits,
And that is no slight argument of honour.
LONGFELLOW.

the text of the whole Canto is surely Jeremias vii. 17—"Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Juda and in the streets of Jerusalem"; and where St. Peter, glowing red with celestial indignation, rebukes his unworthy successor, his triple repetition of *il luogo mio*, my place that has been usurped, *il luogo mio*, *il luogo mio*, *il luogo mio*, recalls and was probably suggested by Jer. vii. 4: "Trust not in lying words saying: The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, it is the temple of the Lord." In many other passages of this Canto the resemblance to the utterances of Jeremias is obvious. For instance, St. Peter's denunciation of the bishops of the separate dioceses—

In vesta di pastor lupi rapaci
Si veggion di quassù per tutti i paschi.

"In garb of pastors rapacious wolves are seen from here above through all the pastures" evidently imitates the opening of the Prophet's chapter xxiii. "Woe to the pastors that destroy and tear the sheep of my pasture"; and the promise of succour from God which follows, and Dante's perpetual hope of a deliverer to come, correspond with Jeremias' prophecy in the same chapter of the just branch that the Lord will raise up to David. Even the concluding injunction of St. Peter to Dante, to conceal nothing of what he has heard and seen, is an echo of Jer. xxvi. 2, with its admonition from the Lord to His prophet not to leave out one word; and at the very end of the Canto, when Beatrice prophesies of the roaring of the heavens to usher in the change of fortune,—

Ruggeran sì questi cerchi superni,

we are again reminded of Jeremias (although similar expressions are familiar enough in Joel and others of the

prophets): "The Lord shall roar from on high and shall utter His voice from His holy habitation."

This letter also illustrates Dante's attitude towards another and more modern kind of prophet, the followers of the Abbot Joachim. Joachim himself had vigorously assailed corruption in high places of the Church, and had regarded himself as having a special gift from God to interpret the prophetical books of the Scriptures, with special reference to the history of the Church; and it is well known how the adherents of this extraordinary mystic had filled Italy with their prophecies concerning the Church, and the Papacy, France and the Empire, to which latter power they were entirely hostile. Joachim himself was supposed to have prophesied that France was the reed that should pierce right through the hand of the Pope who leaned upon it, and the assertions of his followers in the same direction might certainly appear to have been partly fulfilled by the continuance of the Papal exile at Avignon. "Thy prophets have seen false and foolish things for thee: and they have not laid open thy iniquity, to excite thee to penance: but they have seen for thee false revelations and banishments." Although perhaps suggested by the Lamentations, Dante's words in this epistle concerning false prophets, "crude prophets that assert as necessary what ye have deliberately chosen by misuse of your free will,"[1] would certainly seem to be a hostile reference to these prophecies of the later Joachimists. It was not to justify their assertions that these things had come to pass. Dr. Döllinger has regarded Dante himself as, to some extent, an adherent of this sect: "Dante was a Joachimist, but after his own eclectic fashion, with the reservation which his favourite doctrine of the divine

[1] His actual words are, *Astronomi quidam et crude prophetantes necessarium asserunt, quod, male usi libertate arbitrii, eligere maluistis.*

right and calling of the Empire rendered indispensable."[1] He has pointed out that many of Dante's more mysterious utterances, such as the *Veltro* and the *cinquecento dieci e cinque*, may be derived from Joachim and his followers, who taught that a new dark-robed order was to arise, a spiritual power in the period of the Holy Spirit, who would abstain from worldly possessions and convert and regenerate mankind. The later followers of Joachim believed too in an Emperor to come, who should punish France and the Papacy, but this Emperor himself would be no deliverer but a cruel oppressor.[2] Certainly Dante's judgment upon the Calabrian Abbot himself is a highly favourable one: he is in the heaven of the Sun in the second circle of great doctors by the side of St. Bonaventura, as one

Di spirito profetico dotato,

endowed with prophetic spirit. It is, however, perfectly clear that Dante's admiration for the man himself did not extend to his followers. In the same Canto (*Par.* xii.), St. Bonaventura rebukes Joachim's Franciscan admirers in the person of Ubertino da Casale, a friar who headed the spirituals, the party among the Franciscans who held by the doctrines of Joachim and desired to draw still tighter the severe rules that bound the members of the order. Dante probably intended to at once express his belief in Joachim's own sincerity and repudiate the exaggerated tenets of his later adherents. He makes Bonaventura couple this Fra Ubertino with Matteo d'Acquasparta, the lax Franciscan Cardinal whose endeavours to interfere with the government of Florence were successfully resisted by Dante

[1] DÖLLINGER, *Dante as a Prophet* (Studies in European History).

[2] Ibid. Cf. also DÖLLINGER'S *Prophecies and the Prophetic Spirit in the Christian Era.*

in his priorate, and in part led to his exile; neither from Casale nor from Acquasparta will the true follower of St. Francis come (*Par.* xii. 124).

Like the letters on the Emperor's expedition, so this on the papal election ends in hope, in hope which was not fulfilled in the poet's lifetime. The Italian Cardinals entered into the strife, but were worsted by the violence of the Gascon party, and, when the interregnum ended, there was another French Pope upon the throne of Peter and the chariot of the Bride remained at Avignon. It is not certain that Dante's letter ever reached the conclave, but there was one man among the Italian Cardinals—Napoleone Orsini, to whom Dante's exhortation was specially addressed and whom he admonished by name in the letter—who seems to have risen to the situation and even caught a spark of Dante's own fire. Orsini's letter to King Philip, upon the state of the Church on the death of Pope Clement, is a noble and zealous production, not unworthy of Dante himself, full of righteous indignation at the corruption and simony which disgraced the Church, and of sincere self-reproach for his own share in the election of that pontiff, ardent for Rome as the only rightful seat of the papacy and for the election of a just and holy Pope to reform the Church. Like Dante he renews for Rome the yearning lament of Jeremias over Jerusalem. "Let us elect a Pope for the Church who will show himself a true vicar of Christ. Otherwise the Faith and the Church will be ruined, and we shall be reputed guilty of the blood of all souls."[1] Yet history was

[1] Neapoleonis de Ursinis Cardinalis epistola ad Philippum Regem Francorum de statu Romanæ Ecclesiæ post obitum Clementis V. (Baluzius, *Vitæ Paparum Avenionensium*. Paris, 1693). There are some striking points of resemblance between this letter and Dante's to the Cardinals.

to show, not the inspired Florentine poet, nor the patriotic Roman Cardinal, but the simple maiden of Siena, the dyer's daughter Caterina Benincasa, by her influence leading the Pope back in triumph to the Eternal City.

In the letter to Can Grande, Dante turns from these political and ecclesiastical themes to the more purely ideal and peaceful world of literature. The bearing of the contents of that letter upon the *Paradiso*, and indeed upon the general interpretation of the Divine Comedy, has been already touched upon. There is one very noteworthy passage which should be taken, not in a merely general sense of mortal unworthiness to enter into celestial things, but as a very frank and distinctly personal utterance of Dante himself. In the *Convito* (I. 2.), while condemning the speaking of oneself in literature, Dante declares it to be lawful in certain cases of necessity, as to dispel calumny, or for the purpose of instructing and edifying others by our own example, as in the case of St. Augustine with his Confessions. It is evident, from the *Convito*, that Dante feared that his own personal reputation was not such as to justify his standing forth as a teacher of truth and a proclaimer of justice; and that thought is still with him here. Haunted by an apprehension lest his former mode of life, for which Guido Cavalcanti had rebuked him in a well known sonnet, and which he had recorded with repentance in his conversation with Forese Donati in the *Purgatorio*, should lessen his power of impressing the world with the reality of his divine mission, he had tried in the *Convito* to throw an allegorical veil over one part of the past; but now, towards the close of his days, he is absolutely open in his confession. If the invidious do not believe in the power of the human intellect to so soar aloft and transcend human conditions, as was needed for such a sublime vision as this, let them read the examples

cited from Scripture and the treatises of Richard of St. Victor, Bernard, and Augustine. But, perhaps, it is only the personal unworthiness and sinful life of the author himself that makes them still doubt:—

"Si vero in dispositionem elevationis tantae propter peccatum loquentis oblatrarent, legant Danielem, ubi et Nabuchodonosor invenient contra peccatores aliqua vidisse divinitus, oblivionique mandasse. Nam 'Qui oriri solem suum facit super bonos et malos, et pluit super justos et injustos', aliquando misericorditer ad conversionem, aliquando severe ad punitionem, plus et minus, ut vult, gloriam suam quantumcumque male viventibus manifestat."[1]

We are thus clearly justified in taking the first two cantos of the *Inferno* as an allegory of Dante's own conversion, as well as the more general and universal allegory. Whatever his actual faults had been, they were clearly well known, and a bitterer sting was added to his repentance by the thought that his personal reputation would impair the value of his work for the regeneration of the world—

Me degno a ciò nè io nè altri crede.

Notwithstanding the example of many of the earlier commentators, it is not for us to inquire precisely how much of the bitter self accusation which rings through so many

[1] *Epistola Kani* § 28. "If, however, because of the sin of the speaker they still bark against a condition of such elevation, let them read Daniel, where they will find that even Nabuchodonosor by divine inspiration had a vision against sinners which he then forgot. For He 'who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust', sometimes in mercy for conversion, sometimes in severity for punishment, more and less, as He wills, manifests His glory even to those that live ill."

cantos of the poem is personal, how much allegorical. When Dante kneels in deep contrition before the Angel at the gate of St. Peter, when he passes through the purging fire and makes confession to Beatrice, the personal element plays no little part. Yet we have always his own words concerning Virgil:—

> O dignitosa coscienza e netta,
> Come t'è picciol fallo amaro morso![1]

It has been observed that there is no tenderness comparable to that of the man who could yet, relentlessly, brand the names of so many of his noblest countrymen with everlasting infamy in his *Inferno;* nor is there any humility to equal that of the mighty singer who characterised himself as an *alma sdegnosa*, and whose soul was weighed down by fear of the purging torment of the Proud.

A far gentler strain makes itself heard in the two Eclogues, where Dante appears as the father of modern pastoral poetry. A young lecturer upon law and a minor poet, Giovanni del Virgilio, so called from his admiration for him who had been so tender a guide to Dante through Hell and Purgatory,—

> Clericus Aonidum, vocalis verna Maronis,

had written to Dante from Bologna a letter in Latin verse (though not in the pastoral style), full of admiration for his great work, but much regretting that it was being written in Italian, since none of that noble band in Limbo who

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[1] *Purg.* iii. 8. O noble conscience, and without a stain,
How sharp a sting is trivial fault to thee!
LONGFELLOW

had made Dante one of themselves, nor even Statius, had written in the vulgar tongue. Let Dante come to Bologna to receive the laurel crown, upon which glorious occasion the younger poet seems to anticipate no little share in the function of the coronation.

It was in answer to this, and another which followed it, that Dante, assuming the pastoral style as Tityrus, wrote his Eclogues. There are clearer glimpses of his life in these than in his prose epistles, in spite of the artificiality of their form.[1] They give a brighter picture of the great poet's declining years, when the worst of wandering in poverty was over and he had at last found a not uncongenial refuge at Ravenna. Friends and pupils have gathered round him, admirers write to him from afar, while, among the ancient graves of Emperors and the mosaic adorned temples of primitive Christianity, the majestic old poet-shepherd leans upon his staff, and still gazes yearningly to where the Arno flows and Florence stands. He interchanges kindly jests with a younger shepherd Melibœus (his fellow exile, Dino Perini), and listens courteously to the philosophical moralising of old Alphesibœus (Fiducio de' Milotti) concerning the return of souls to the stars. A loud and hearty laugh suddenly rings out, and there are few things in literature so perfectly delightful to hear, as this laughter for once from the stern poet who had been indeed scorched by the "whirring sulphur-spume" of Hell! For the letter from Mopsus (Giovanni del Virgilio) has come to old Tityrus, and his fellow shepherd Melibœus is very anxious to learn what Mopsus wants, and to read the song too. But good Melibœus is no poet and cannot see the joke at all:—

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[1] Cf. CARDUCCI, *Della Varia Fortuna di Dante* in his *Studi Letterari.*

Ille quidem (cupiebat enim consciscere cantum),
Tityre, quid Mopsus, quid vult? edissere, dixit.
Ridebam, Mopse; magis et magis ille premebat.
Victus amore sui, posito vix denique risu,
Stulte, quid insanis? inquam; tua cura capellæ
Te potius poscunt, quamquam mala cænula turbet.
Pascua sunt ignota tibi, quæ Mænalus alto
Vertice declivi celator solis inumbrat,
Herbarum vario florumque inpicta colore.[1]

However, in spite of their fun, when the laughter has subsided, Dino and Dante talk over the letter and the invitation. Wilt thou never take the laurel crown? But Dante, though longing still to deck his brow with the sacred leaves, trusts not Bologna, apparently because of its historical hostility to the Empire, and will take the consecrated wreath only from Florence:—

Quantos balatus colles et prata sonabunt,
Si viridante coma fidibus pæna ciebo!
Sed timeam saltus et rura ignara deorum.
Nonne triumphales melius pexare capillos,
Et, patrio redeam si quando, abscondere canos
Fronde, sub inserta solitum flavescere, Sarno?[2]

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[1] He indeed, in his desire to share the song with me, said, "Tityrus, what does Mopsus want? Tell me." I laughed, Mopsus; he urged me more and more. At last conquered by love for him, my laughter scarce repressed, "Foolish fellow, why dost rave?" I said, "Look to thy goats, in spite of scanty fare. The pastures are unknown to thee which Mænalus, that hides the sun, overshadows with his lofty sloping summit, adorned with varied hues of grass and flowers" (*i.e.*, Melibœus does not understand allegorical poetry).

Dante's first Eclogue.

[2] With what bleatings will hills and meadows resound, if with laurel-decked hair I raise from the lyre the pæan hymn. But I fear the groves and the fields that know not the gods. Were it not better to crown my locks and hide under the laurel wreath my grey hair, once golden, whene'er I return to my native Arno? *Ibid.*

It is the same thought that occurs at the opening of *Par.* xxv., though here an earlier expression of it. These Eclogues are a valuable commentary upon the latter part of the *Paradiso*. Not only do they treat of the laurel crown and Dante's desire to return to Florence, but they point to the late date of composition of that Canticle. In the first letter of Giovanni's he suggests some recent stirring events to Dante's consideration as fitting matter for song, apparently regarding them as of more immediate importance and interest to learned men than the world beyond the grave—the death of Henry VII, the great battle of Monte Catini in which Uguccione della Faggiuola had routed the army of the Florentine Republic and King Robert of Naples, a victory of Can Grande della Scala, and the expedition of King Robert by sea to the relief of Genoa. It was apparently the sublimity of these events, and the reasonableness and ingenuousness of his young friend's criticism, that had excited Dante's amusement:—

> Et jam multa tuis lucem narratibus orant.
> Dic age quo petiit Jovis armiger astra volatu:
> Dic age quos flores, quæ lilia fregit arator:
> Dic phrygias damas laceratas dente molosso:
> Dic Ligurum montes, et classes parthenopæas.[1]

This last event took place in the summer of 1318. It will be observed that, in all the others, Magister Joannes very clearly shows his Ghibelline sympathies. At this period the *Paradiso* was not completed, and not till then will Dante aspire to the laurel crown:—

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[1] And now many great events claim fame in thy verse. Tell with what flight Jove's eagle sought the stars. Tell of the flowers and lilies that the ploughman broke. Tell how the Phrygian does were torn by the Molossian tooth. Tell of Ligurian mountains and the fleet of Parthenope. *Giovanni's first Eclogue to Dante.*

> Quum mundi circumflua corpora cantu
> Astricolæque meo, velut infera regna, patebunt,
> Devincire caput hedera lauroque juvabit.[1]

and he speaks of sending ten cantos to his young Bolognese friend—ten pails of milk fresh from the fairest ewe of all his flock—but the cantos are not written yet, as he is only preparing to milk the ewe in question.

Naturally delighted with the mingling of generous praise with kindly banter, Giovanni answers Dante in a still more friendly tone. In his second Eclogue he adopts Dante's pastoral manner, and assures him of the enthusiasm with which he would be received in Bologna, while he condoles with him in his unjust exile and sympathises with his hope of return to Florence:—

> Eheu pulvereo quod stes in tegmine scabro,
> Et merito indignans singultes pascua Sarni
> Rapta tuis gregibus, ingratæ dedecus urbi!
> O, si quando sacros iterum flavescere canos
> Fonte tuo videas, et ab ipsa Phyllide pexos,
> Quam visendo tuas tegetes miraberis ulvas![2]

The peculiar interest of this passage lies in the apparent reference to Dante's wife Gemma as Phyllis, which lends

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[1] When the heavens and the starry dwellers shall be made manifest in my song, as now the lower realms, then will it be well to crown my head with ivy and laurel. *Dante's first Eclogue.*

[2] "Ah me! that thou shouldst dwell in squalid hut,
With dust o'erlaid, and shouldst in righteous wrath,
Mourn for the fields of Arno, fields from thee
Stolen and from thy flocks. Ah, deed of shame
For that ungrateful city!.....
Oh, that once more thou mightest see thy locks,
Locks grey and sacred, gain a second youth,
Grown golden, and be trimmed by Phyllis' self.
How wilt thou then behold with wondering look
Thy vine-clad cottage!"

(*Giovanni's second Eclogue, Plumptre*).

some colour to the pleasant supposition that she is at least included in the *ogni cosa diletta più caramente*, which Cacciaguida in *Par.* xvii. tells Dante he will be forced to leave. Dante's sons, Pietro and Jacopo, together with his daughter Beatrice were with their father in Ravenna at this time, but Gemma, with the other daughter Antonia, certainly remained in Florence. It is, however, probable that there was no real misunderstanding between husband and wife known to Dante's friends, or Giovanni would hardly have ventured upon what would have been a highly tactless allusion, unless Phyllis is taken as a mere personification of the poet's native city.

Dante seems already to have been regarded, both by himself and by others, as quite an old man; Giovanni addresses him as *divine senex* and *blande senex*, and Dante responds in the same strain. It is, however, to be remembered that, in the *Convito*, Dante describes *senettute* (old age) as the period following after *gioventute* (the perfect age), the descent of the arch of man's life from the 45th to the 70th year, and he had reached the age of 56 before his death. A year is said to have elapsed before Dante answered Giovanni with his second Eclogue. It is in the same spirit as the first, full of friendly feeling towards Giovanni himself, with some more pleasant joking with young "Melibœus"; but still, courteously and firmly, declining to visit Bologna. It was only after Dante's death that his son found this Eclogue among his father's papers, and sent it to "Mopsus" at Bologna; and the Bolognese scholar read in it the pathetic reference to the laurel crown, not of earth, but of heaven:—

> Hoc illustre caput, cui jam frondator in alta
> Virgine perpetuas festinat cernere frondes.

which Dr. Plumptre in his translation of the Eclogues has rendered—

> This honoured head to gather wreaths for which,
> Wreaths that fade not, e'en now prepares himself
> The dresser of the vineyard.

Thus Dante and his young admirer never met upon earth, and Giovanni, disappointed in his hopes of assisting at the Master's coronation, had to content himself with writing his epitaph.

These two Eclogues, so noble and so kindly, so comparatively free from anger and rancour, should be set by the concluding cantos of the *Paradiso*, and especially by that exquisite passage which opens Canto xviii., where some bitter thought of vengeance enters into Dante's mind, but is instantly dispelled by the words of Beatrice: *muta pensier*, change thy thought. This *muta pensier* is doubtless the key-note to the poet's latest years, and to this same epoch may, perhaps, be ascribed that sonnet addressed to Giovanni Quirino, and so beautifully translated by Rossetti in his *Dante and his Circle*, in which Dante rejoices that his bitter rancour is dispelled and that his thoughts are already absorbed in the anticipation of Paradise.

> Lo Re, che merta i suoi servi a ristoro
> Con abbondanza, e vince ogni misura,
> Mi fa lasciare la fiera rancura,
> E drizzar gli occhi al sommo concistoro.
> E qui pensando al glorioso coro
> De' cittadin della cittade pura
> Laudando il Creatore, io creatura
> Di più laudarlo sempre m'innamoro.
> Chè s'io contemplo il gran premio venturo,
> A che Dio chiama la cristiana prole,
> Per me niente altro che quello si vuole:
> Ma di te, caro amico, sì mi duole,
> Che non rispetti al secolo futuro,
> E perdi per lo vano il ben sicuro.

Appendix A.

Dante's Sonnet to Giovanni Quirino.

It is to be regretted that the authenticity of this fine sonnet—*Lo Re che merta i suoi servi a ristoro* (xliv. in Fraticelli's edition)—is not beyond doubt. If genuine, it would be one of the few lyrics which can with any probability be referred to the closing years of Dante's life. Besides Rossetti's version, there is an excellent translation by Plumptre; and the two are worth comparing. Rossetti's is of course more poetical, but Plumptre's has the advantage of reproducing more exactly the metre of the original.

ROSSETTI.

The King by whose rich grace His servants be
With plenty beyond measure set to dwell
Ordains that I my bitter wrath dispel
And lift mine eyes to the great consistory;
Till, noting how in glorious quires agree
The citizens of that fair citadel,
To the Creator I His creature swell
Their song, and all their love possesses me.
So, when I contemplate the great reward
To which our God has called the Christian seed,
I long for nothing else but only this.
And then my soul is grieved in thy regard,
Dear friend, who reck'st not of thy nearest need,
Renouncing for slight joys the perfect bliss.

PLUMPTRE.

The king, who doth his servants recompense
In fullest measure, heaped and running o'er,
Bids me my rancorous pride indulge no more,
And to the highest Council look from hence:
And thinking on the choir of citizens,
Who in the heavenly city evermore
Praise their Creator, I, a creature, soar,
Eager to praise yet more His love immense.
For if the future prize I contemplate,
To which God calls all born of Christian race,
Nought else can in my wishes find a place.
But much I mourn for thee, dear friend, whose face
Turns not to look upon that future state,
Losing sure good for shows that hope frustrate.

Like several other sonnets from the same Ambrosian MS., this sonnet shows a certain peculiarity of structure which is not often found in Dante's undoubtedly genuine poems of this class. It will be seen that in the original, as in Plumptre's translation, the rhyme-arrangement of the sestet follows the formula:—

a—b—b : b—a—a,

thus ending in a rhymed couplet, *a rima baciata*. In the unfinished *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, Dante did not reach the point at which he intended to treat of the Sonnet, so we have not his own theory of its ideal structure and rhyme arrangement, as we have in the case of the more complicated Canzone. In the *Vita Nuova*, Dante shows a distinct preference for three rhyme-sounds in the sestet; out of the twenty-three poems which follow the normal sonnet structure, there are only three with sestets constructed upon two rhymes. Of these three, two follow the arrangement expressed by the formula:—

a—b—a : b—a—b;

while the other, which is the first sonnet in the *Vita Nuova* describing the vision which the other poets were to expound, exhibits a rather peculiar type of sestet with the rhyme arrangement:—

a—b—a : a—b—a,

which was followed by Guido Cavalcanti and by Cino da Pistoia in their answers. The structure of the sestet with two rhymes and the closing couplet rhyming with the first line:—

a—b—b : b—a—a,

does not occur in the *Vita Nuova*. Besides the sonnet to Giovanni Quirino, there are only five, of the forty-four sonnets regarded by Fraticelli as probably genuine, which have this ending *a rima baciata*. Although the authenticity of none of these five is absolutely certain, there is considerable probability in favour of several of them being really by Dante. This same rhyme-arrangement was frequently employed by Cino da Pistoia, and is not quite unknown even in Petrarch; out of the latter's 317 sonnets, four have sestets constructed upon this two-rhyme formula with a rhymed couplet at the close, and one of these is the famous tenth Sonnet of the first part of the *Canzoniere* (or xii. in Signor Mestica's *Edizione Critica*)—*Quando fra l'altre donne ad ora ad ora*—which expresses the most purely spiritual of Petrarch's early conceptions of love. In the particular instance of the sonnet to Quirino, the rhyme-arrangement may be merely due to the fact that it was written in answer to a sonnet with its sestet constructed on this principle.

Giovanni Quirino was a Venetian. Besides the fine sonnet addressed to Dante (translated in *Dante and his Circle*), commencing *Lode di Dio e della Madre pura*, in which he commends Dante's labour to the glory of God and of His Virgin Mother, and which called forth Dante's

sonnet in answer, there is another poem of Quirino's given in Fantuzzi's *Notizie degli Scrittori Bolognesi*, vol. VI (Bologna 1788), also relating to Dante and preparing to defend his memory against the attacks of the notorious Cecco d'Ascoli in his *Acerba* after the divine poet's death. Quirino writes from Venice to Matteo di Metivilla at Bologna, and commences:—

> Qui si ragiona che 'l Maestro Cecco
> Ha fatto un libro reprendente Dante,
> E chiama lui in molte parti errante.

"Here they say that Master Cecco has written a book blaming Dante and accusing him of many errors," and he begs his friend to forward him a copy of Cecco's work. From the tone of Matteo's reply, *Famoso signor mio Venetiano*, it is evident that Quirino is a learned man whose opinion on the dispute will carry weight.

Appendix B.

Two Early Interpretations of the Veltro.

About three years after Dante's death, Ser Graziolo dei Bambaglioli, then Chancellor of Bologna, published his famous commentary upon the *Inferno*. His position at the very beginning of critical study of the *Divina Commedia* gives peculiar interest and importance to his attempt to solve the, perhaps insoluble, problem of what Dante really meant by his prophecy of the coming of the *Veltro*. It is needless to say that for him the Wolf is Cupidity, *radix omnium malorum*, and that no anticipation of modern political interpretations are to be found in his work.

Molti son gli animali, a cui si ammoglia,
E più saranno ancora, infin che il Veltro
Verrà, che la farà morir di doglia.
Questi non ciberà terra nè peltro,
Ma sapienza e amore e virtute,
E sua nazion sarà tra feltro e feltro.
Di quell' umile Italia fia salute,
Per cui morì la vergine Cammilla,
Eurialo, e Turno, e Niso di ferute.
Questi la caccerà per ogni villa,
Fin che l'avrà rimessa nell' inferno,
Là onde invidia prima dipartilla.

Inf. i. 100.[1]

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[1] Many are the animals with whom she [the Wolf] weds,
And more they shall be still, until the Greyhound
Comes, who shall make her perish in her pain.

Graziolo mentions that a great variety of views were held even then upon these lines (*varii varia sentiant*), but declares that they ought clearly to be understood in two ways, in a divine sense and in a human sense, both of which he works out in detail. In the divine sense, this *Veltro* is that Divine and Ineffable Wisdom, of which it is written, "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world," and, "He shall come again to judge both the living and the dead"; and Graziolo sees this further confirmed in the verse about earth and pelf, for no man can be free from sin save the Son of God.[1] He refers this driving back of the Wolf to Hell to the Last Judgment, interpreting *tra feltro e feltro* as *inter sceleratos impios et peccatores*, these being figured by "felt" as an indifferent cloth, *pannus vilissimus*. In the human and more immediate sense, the *Veltro* is some Pope or Emperor, or some other hero who will arise, lofty in prudence, sublime in virtue and authority, under whose wise and just rule men will walk in the paths of righteous-

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He shall not feed on either earth or pelf,
But upon wisdom and on love and virtue;
'Twixt Feltro and Feltro shall his nation be;
Of that low Italy shall he be the saviour,
On whose account the maid Camilla died,
Euryalus, Turnus, Nisus, of their wounds;
Through every city shall he hunt her down,
Until he shall have driven her back to Hell,
There from whence envy first did let her loose.

The *virtute* of line 104 should perhaps be rendered *Power:* power, wisdom, love, being the attributes of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. To thus write *Feltro* for *feltro*, as most modern editors do, is to take as proved one special interpretation of a very difficult question.

[1] The line may, however, refer to our Lord's words to Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world."

ness and truth, and wickedness will be confounded. By the influence of the heavens this future leader or prince is to come into the world, and establish universal peace beneath his sway, as under Augustus when our Lord was born. In this sense, we are to understand by *feltro e feltro* that this wise and just ruler is to spring from a humble stock: "for since felt is a very lowly material, so by it is figured his parents and race."

This rare mediæval puzzle had lost none of its fascination when Benvenuto da Imola lectured, half a century later: "What then is this *Veltro*," he asks, "about which many have said false and frivolous things, and about which there are so many contentions and opinions?" Benvenuto aptly refers his hearers to Virgil's fourth Eclogue, where he speaks of the birth of a child who shall reform the world, and beneath whom the golden age will be renewed:—

> Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna;
> Jam nova progenies cælo demittitur alto.

and to *Purgatorio* xxii., where Dante, through Statius, renders the lines into Italian:—

> Secol si rinnova;
> Torna giustizia, e primo tempo umano,
> E progenie discende dal ciel nuova.

Benvenuto holds that Dante wishes to imitate this Virgilian passage, and that just as Virgil's lines had been interpreted in two senses, the one referring to the nativity of Christ and the other to the birth of a child of Octavianus, so Dante's prophecy of the *Veltro* is to be understood both of Christ coming at the day of Judgment and of a future Roman Prince, who will reign in all wisdom and virtue, and punish the avarice of the pastors of the Church.

Benvenuto scorns the notion that *feltro* can possibly refer to a place, Feltre or Montefeltro, and interprets it as the heavens; Christ will come in the sky to judge the world, and the Roman Prince will be born under a good constellation and happy conjunction of stars. It will be observed that this explanation is strongly supported by *Purgatorio* xx., where it is distinctly stated that the destroyer of the Wolf is to come through the circling of the celestial bodies; and by *Purgatorio* xxxiii., where Beatrice declares that a favourable constellation is at hand, under which the Messenger of God will slay the Harlot and the Giant. The analogy between felt and the heavens seems to Benvenuto peculiarly excellent: "It is indeed a beautiful and subtle similitude," he says; "for as felt is without texture, so is the sky without mixture, since it is a simple body." That this deliverer is especially called the salvation of Italy, Benvenuto supposes an allusion to the Roman Catholic Church, in obedience to whom lies salvation, but who should be humble and shut no one out from her fold; and in the second sense, to the future Prince being especially the saviour of oppressed Italy, whose Rome should be the seat of Papacy and Empire alike.

It seems indeed a highly plausible interpretation, that as Virgil in his life had sung of the foundation of the Roman Empire, and had darkly prophesied of the first coming of Christ, so now he should in the Divine Comedy foretell an approaching restoration of that same Empire and, at the same time, announce mysteriously the second coming of Christ. The whole episode of Statius in the *Purgatorio* confirms this. Statius had been converted from the sin of Prodigality by a line in Virgil's *Æneid*, and had turned to Christianity through his prophecy of Christ's birth in the fourth Eclogue; so Dante, in *Inferno* i., cries to Virgil for help against the she-wolf of Avarice, and, when

about to commence under his guidance the journey which represents his own conversion to a better life, hears from his lips a prophecy of Christ's second coming. And in each case Virgil remained in darkness, and did not fully know the meaning of what he had said. His words helped Statius and Dante on the road of salvation, but aided not himself:—

> Facesti come quei che va di notte,
> Che porta il lume retro, e sè non giova,
> Ma dopo sè fa le persone dotte.
>
> *Purg.* xxii. 67.[1]

There is a further point of the greatest interest in Ser Graziolo's explanation of the *Veltro*, in that he connects it with one of Dante's own Canzoni. It is that famous Canzone of the Three Ladies (Canzone xix. in Fraticelli's edition), the authenticity of which, attested to later by Leonardo Bruni, is thus rendered certain by the testimony of Dante's contemporary. Speaking of the human *Veltro*, the earthly leader to come, under whose wise and just rule the human race will again turn to virtue and truth, Graziolo says:[2] "And this is what our author himself certainly demonstrates, in that Canzone of his in the vulgar tongue which commences:

> Tre donne intorno al cor mi son venute:

when he mourns and laments in the person of justice and other virtues for that they are despised and forgotten, where he says:—

---

[1] Thou didst as he who walketh in the night,
Who bears his light behind, which helps him not,
But wary makes the persons after him.

[2] *Il Commento all' Inferno di Graziolo de' Bambaglioli*, edito per cura del prof. A. Fiammazzo. Udine, 1892.

Larghezza e Temperanza, e l'altre nate
Del nostro sangue mendicando vanno;
Però, se questo è danno,
Pianganlo gli occhi, e dolgasi la bocca
Degli uomini a cui tocca,
Che sono a' raggi di cotal ciel giunti;
Non noi, che semo dell' eterna rocca:
Chè, se noi siamo or punti,
Noi pur saremo, e pur troverem gente,
Che questo dardo farà star lucente."[1]

The Canzone is one of the noblest of Dante's later lyrics, and it is indeed well to have this contemporary testimony to its authenticity, even apart from what light it may throw upon the question of the *Veltro*. Greater than he have been banished, Dante tells us. Three mystical Ladies are exiles even as he is, and appear to him in his banishment. They are *Drittura*, *Larghezza*, *Temperanza:* Righteousness or Justice, Generosity, Temperance; and since these are his companions in misfortune, the poet holds his exile as an honour:—

L'esilio, che m'è dato, onor mi tegno.

---

[1] Bounty and Temperance, and the rest cognate,
Of our high blood, must needs a-begging go;
Wherefore, if this be woe,
Let those eyes weep, those lips to wail it learn,
Whom most it doth concern,
Who dwell beneath the rays of such a heaven;
Not ours, who to the eternal Rock may turn;
For, be we now sore driven,
We yet shall live, and yet shall find a race
Who with this dart shall each dark stain efface.
PLUMPTRE.

Instead of *Noi pur saremo*, "we yet shall live", Carducci reads *Non pur saremo:* we shall not always be persecuted as we are now.

This noble line is a summary of the whole of the Canzone; and it is of much pathetic interest that it should have been so studied and its authenticity attested to by Ser Graziolo, who was himself in a few years to experience, like Dante, the bitterness of unmerited banishment, and, like him, to learn (as one of the little poems on the moral virtues, with which he solaced his exile, puts it) how honour is gained in noble suffering:—

Come del bel soffrir s'acquista onore.

INDEX OF NAMES.

A.

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